

and tribal. The Tribal areas have been defined by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Backward areas from the postal development point of view, are defined considering the state of development of a particular area is 100% behind the all-India averages of population/area served per Post Office or not.

(ii) Secondly, when a particular area is worse off than the all-India average and also the Circle average on counts of population/area served, besides comparing unfavourably with the Circle as a whole in respect of percentage of villages provided with Post Offices, the area is given the status of "backward".

(iii) The all-India average per Post Office is 23.10 Sq. Kms. and population 4,805. The backward areas are subsidized more in order to bring them up at a faster pace.

(iv) The concept of "Villy Areas" has been dispensed with as hilly areas which are also tribal areas, are automatically covered in the category of 'Tribal Areas'.

### (3) Criteria for opening Post Offices in Urban Areas

Post Offices are opened in urban areas subject to the following conditions :

(i) The Post Office should be financially self-supporting; and

(ii) The minimum distance between two Post Offices should be 1 Kms. in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above. In other urban areas, the minimum distance between two Post Offices should be 1.5 Kms.

Heads of Circles are competent to relax the distance condition in 10% of the cases every year.

### Modification and Liberalisation of MRTP Act

[English]

1052. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR YADAV : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have any proposal under consideration for modification and liberalisation of the MRTP Act; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS : (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is proposed to raise the existing monetary limit of assets provided in section 20(a) of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969, from Rs. 20 crores to Rs. 100 crores.

[Translation]

### Telephone Exchange of Bhikiyasen in Almora District (U.P.)

1053. SHRI HARISH RAWAT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that telephone exchange at Bhikiyasen in Almora District of Uttar Pradesh has been out of order for a long time ; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken to ensure smooth functioning of this exchange ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) No, Sir. Telephone exchange at Bhikiyasen is working satisfactorily.

(b) Question does not arise in view of reply at (a) above.

[English]

### Crisis in Engineering Industry

1054. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether engineering industry in the country is facing crisis ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the production of engineering industry during the last four years, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Based on the latest data available on state-wise production of engineering industry, a statement is attached.