

Opening of post offices in Orissa

477a. SHRI GANANATH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) how many Branch Post Offices, Sub-Post Offices, Post Offices and Public Call Offices and telephone connections will be provided in Orissa in the coming five years ;

(b) whether a Master Plan for this has been drawn up ; and

(c) What are the criteria adopted for construction of such Branch Post Offices, Sub Post Offices, Post Offices and Public Call Offices ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI) :

(a) *Post Offices :*

Roll-On-Plan (1978-83) has not yet been finalised. The tentative proposal of the PMG, Orissa is to open 1532 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 376 Sub Post Offices in the State during the Plan period 1978-1983.

Public Call Offices :

200 long distance Public Call Offices are proposed to be provided in Orissa in the coming five years.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Plan is subject to approval of Planning Commission.

(c) The criteria adopted at present for opening of Post Offices and Public Call Offices in rural areas are detailed in statements 'I' and 'II' laid on the Table of the House [Placed in Library See No. LT-1446/77].

Opening of a Regional Passport Office in Assam

478a. SHRI AHMED HUSSAIN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) Government's policy towards providing more passport offices in the near future ;

(b) the number of regional passport offices likely to start functioning by the end of the current financial year in view of Government's decision to simplify passport systems in the country ; and

(c) whether Government will consider to open at least one regional passport office in Assam by the end of the current financial year ; and the likely date when the regional passport office will start functioning there ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU) : (a) The criterion for the opening of a passport office in a State is that at least 30,000 applications for passports must be received from it, in a year. While Government is conscious of the necessity of opening more passport offices in order to improve the service to the public, the need to have economically viable offices as also the necessity of curtailing non-plan expenditure are the limitations.

(b) Government is keeping a continuous watch on the level of applications received from each State. The number of applications received from Rajasthan has crossed 30,000 and, therefore, opening of an Office in that State during the current financial year is being considered subject to the limitation mentioned at (a) above. ;

(c) The number of applications received from the State of Assam during the current financial year is estimated to be 500 and, therefore, there is no proposal presently to open a passport office in that State during the current financial year.

Telephone connections to people, of Jokihat Block Headquarters, District Purnea, Bihar

478b. SHRI HALIMUDDIN AHMED : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether people of Jokihat Block Headquarters in the District of Purnea in Bihar have demanded installation of telephone connection and if so, when ;

(b) the reason for delay in providing telephone connection to them ; and

(c) the time by which they are likely to be provided telephone connection ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI) : (a) to (c). The demand for installation of telephone facility at Jokihat in Purnea District was originally received in 1972. The proposal was examined, but could not be sanctioned, because it was showing a loss, which could not be condoned according to the policy then prevailing.

A fresh demand for provision of P.C.O. was received in May 1977. With the recent liberalisation of the policy in regard to opening of P.C.Os it has been possible to approve the scheme this time.

The P. C. O. is likely to be commissioned during the current financial year.