

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) and (b). Dr. Sirohi is the first Indian Scientist to visit the South Pole as a member of a Scientific Team from the University of California at Los Angeles during 1960-61. He was at that time working as a Research Scientist in that University. The object of this expedition was to ascertain whether any factor associated with the earth's rotation regulated the biological clock of plants and animals. The U. S. Board of Geographic Names have named one place in the South Pole as 'Sirohi Point' in recognition of his work as the member of the expedition.

(c) and (d). Dr. G. S. Sirohi was appointed at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in 1963, in the scale of Rs. 700-50-1250. Thereafter, he has been offered the post of senior Plant Physiologist in the pay scale of Rs. 1100-50-1400. While making these selections the Selection Committees had, no doubt, taken into consideration, all his achievements in the field of Agricultural science.

Voters for Presidential Elections

10273. SHRI M. MEGHACHANDRA: Will the Minister of LAW be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have examined the points raised in the judgement and order given by the Court of Judicial Commissioner, Manipur in the Election Writ case filed by 15 inhabitants of Manipur and the Judgement announced on the 5th April, 1968 ;

(b) if so, whether the Election Commission has to enrol as votes the members of the Legislatures in the Union Territories in the Election of the President of India ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW (SHRI M. YUNUS SALEEM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The Election Commission considers that the order given by the Judicial Commissioner, Manipur has no bearing with the constitution of electoral college contemplated under article 54 of the Constitution.

Teleprinter service between Delhi-Agartala and Calcutta-Agartala

10274. SHRI KIRIT BIKRAM DEB BURMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) on how many occasions and for how long the Teleprinter service between Delhi-Agartala and Calcutta-Agartala were interrupted or cut during 1967 and in 1968 so far ;

(b) the reasons for such frequent failures of this link ; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to improve the Teleprinter service ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) There is no direct teleprinter circuit between Delhi and Agartala but the telegrams are generally routed *via* Calcutta. The number of occasions and the period of interruption for the telegraph service between Calcutta and Agartala during 1967 and in 1968 till 30.4.68 are as follows :—

Year	No. of occasions of service interrupted.	Period of interruption.
1967	41	194 hrs.
1968 (till 30.4.68)	14	62 „

(b) Interruptions to telegraph service are due to—

- (1) unstable power supply at Agartala ;
- (2) adverse weather conditions affecting wireless working.

(c) As a short-term measure for improving service, stand-by power plants have been ordered to be installed at Agartala. As a long-term measure, microwave links have been planned for connecting Agartala to Calcutta for telecommunication purposes

Plywood Factory in Tripura

10275. SHRI KIRIT BIKRAM DEB BURMAN : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether, in connection with the proposal to set up a plywood factory in

Tripura, a draft agreement to be executed between the Government of Tripura and M/s. Jay Shree Tea and Industries Ltd., Calcutta had been submitted to the Central Government for their approval ;

(b) if so, when it was submitted and the reasons for the delay in according necessary sanction for the conclusion of the said draft agreement ; and

(c) the broad details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The draft agreement was received by the Central Government on 18.1.66. The draft agreement was examined and it was found that it required to be re-written. The Tripura Administration was, therefore, requested to prepare a fresh draft for which certain guide-lines were indicated. The revised draft is still awaited from the Tripura Administration.

(c) Briefly stated, the original draft agreement was for a lease of right of removal of 14,150 cubic meters of plylogs of certain selected 16 timber species, above certain minimum girth limits, every year for 31 years from the Government forests of Udaipur, Belonia and Sabroom civil sub-divisions of Tripura Union Territory. Different classes of timber with the proviso that these rates could be revised every 5 years, if the lessor so desired, but to the extent of not more than 15% each time. The proposed lease period of 31 years was also kept renewable at the option of the lessor for a further period, should the lessee apply in this behalf and should he have performed the terms of the original agreement satisfactorily in the opinion of the lessor.

Telephone Trunk Lines between Silchar and Agartala

10276. SHRI KIRIT BIKRAM DEB BURMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the telephone trunk lines between Silchar and Agartala have since been strengthened for installing the 8-channel carrier system ;

(b) if so, whether the work has been completed and if not, when it is likely to be completed ; and

(c) the steps taken to provide a direct circuit between Agartala and Shillong and the cost thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes.

(b) The work has been completed.

(c) An 8-Channel carrier system for Agartala-Silchar route has been ordered and allotted on priority. The installation of this system, which has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 95,000/-, will enable the provision of a direct circuit between Agartala and Shillong. The work is likely to be completed during the current financial year.

Agartala Telephone Exchange

10277. SHRI KIRIT BIKRAM DEB BURMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a scheme for conversion of the Agartala Telephone Exchange (Tripura) to Automatic Exchange has run into difficulties and has failed to make any progress for over 4 years ;

(b) if so, the nature of the difficulties ; and

(c) the steps which are being taken to resolve the same and how long it is likely to take to complete it ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Conversion of Agartala Telephone Exchange (Tripura) to automatic working, involves construction of a new building for which a suitable land in a central locality is required. Efforts to locate a suitable land for this purpose, even with the assistance of the local Govt., have not borne fruit so far.

(c) Efforts are being made to secure a suitable alternative plot. As soon as the land is acquired, action, to construct a suitable building for the proposed Exchange, will be taken. Commissioning of the Main auto exchange may take about 5 to 6 years after the land is acquired.