

from the allocation under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), to which the Centre and State Governments contribute in the ratio of 3:1. The Centre's Share is released annually in 4 equal quarterly instalments. Three quarterly instalments of Centre's Share of CRF for 1998-99 amounting to Rs. 747.08 crore have been released to all the States.

In addition to CRF, a National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) has been created, on the recommendations of Tenth Finance Commission to deal with Calamities of rare severity. As per established procedure for assistance under this scheme, the State Governments are required to submit a memorandum indicating the extent of damage and relief assistance required. Central Teams are deputed, wherever necessary, for assessment of the situation. The Report of the Central Team is first considered by the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG). The Report of the Central Team and the recommendations of the IMG thereon are then considered by the National Calamity Relief Committee for a decision on the quantum of assistance, if any, from the NFCR.

#### Procurement Policy of Cotton

464. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged to the Union Government to make changes in procurement policies of cotton as the cotton farmers in the State of Andhra Pradesh were facing bleak future in getting remunerative prices due to the decline in cotton prices in global markets;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) The time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged the Central Government to make changes in the procurement policy of cotton in Andhra Pradesh. In his letter dated 13th October, 1998 addressed to Prime Minister of India, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has suggested that the Cotton Corporation of India may be directed to purchase at least 20% of the market arrivals at all important market yards during this season. In this regard it may be stated that the textile policy announced in June, 1985 inter-alia emphasised the reformulation of the role and functions of the Corporation to include price stabilisation operations with necessary access to international market. The Corporation has been entrusted the following three roles:

- (i) To undertake price support operations, whenever the market price of kapas touch the support prices announced by the Government without any quantitative limit.
- (ii) To undertake commercial operations only at CCI's own risk and
- (iii) To purchase cotton to fulfil the export quota given to CCI.

In view of above, it may be difficult for the Corporation to

make a fix percentage of purchases of the total arrival in the State, because the Corporation has to undertake its commercial operations at its own risk and responsibility. Further, it may be mentioned that, no budgetary support is provided to the Corporation in case of losses, from the Government exchequer.

The Cotton Corporation of India, however, ensures that its representatives shall remain in the market yards right from the day one of the auction till the last day of the arrivals so as to ensure that the farmers get a competitive price for their produce.

#### Opening of New Post Offices and Tele-Density

465. SHRI SAMAR CHOUDHURY:

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of targets set up to increase the number of post offices and tele-density in the country during the Ninth Five Year Plan, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government are aware that tele-density is far below in Bihar and West Bengal as compare to other States; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA):

#### Department of Posts

(a) A target for opening 2500 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 250 Departmental Sub Post Offices throughout the country during the Ninth Plan period has been proposed, subject to availability of resources. Targets are allocated Postal Circle-wise for each Annual Plan. Circle-wise allocation of targets for Annual Plan 1998-99 is given in the statement attached.

#### Department of Telecom

The Ninth Five Year Plan proposal submitted to the Planning Commission for approval envisages to provide 23.7 million new telephone connections in the country during the period 1997-2002. This includes about 3 million telephones through Private sector participation. The tele-density in the country was 1.53 per hundred inhabitants as on 1.4.97 and has risen to 1.84 by March, 1998 and is expected to reach around 4 by the year 2002. The State-wise tele-density will be worked out after the approval of Ninth Five Year Plan proposals by the Planning Commission.

(b) Yes, Sir,

(c) Annual targets of new telephone connections for Bihar and West Bengal for 1998-99 have been fixed giving due weightage to tele-density. Targets are fixed in such a manner that it will not only clear the waiting list as on 31-3-98 but will be sufficient to clear most of the new registrations that would take place during the current year in the two telecom circles.

**Statement***Circle-wise allotment of targets for opening Post Offices during annual plan 1998-99*

Sl. No.	Name of Circle	Targets Allotted for opening EDBOs in			Targets Allotted for opening DSOs in		
		Other Areas	Tribal Areas	Total	Other Areas	Tribal Areas	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	7	3	10	1	1	2
2.	Assam	40	10	50	1	1	2
3.	Bihar	42	18	60	2	1	3
4.	Delhi	17	—	17	3	—	3
5.	Gujarat	32	8	40	2	—	2
6.	Haryana	15	—	15	3	—	3
7.	Himachal Pradesh	7	3	10	1	1	2
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	20	10	30	1	—	1
9.	Karnataka	8	2	10	4	—	4
10.	Kerala	10	—	10	2	—	2
11.	Madhya Pradesh	30	20	50	1	1	2
12.	Maharashtra	46	14	60	3	—	3
13.	North-East	31	19	50	1	2	3
14.	Orissa	6	4	10	1	1	2
15.	Punjab	15	—	15	2	—	2
16.	Rajasthan	16	14	30	1	1	2
17.	Tamil Nadu	7	3	10	2	—	2
18.	Uttar Pradesh	66	12	78	6	—	6
19.	West Bengal	29	8	37	3	—	3
20.	Sikkim	6	—	6	1	—	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>450</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>50</b>

**Externally Funded Schemes**

466. SHRI JAYANTA RONGPI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of externally funded schemes being implemented in the hilly areas of Assam;

(b) whether Autonomous Hill Councils of the Area are the implementing agency of all such externally funded schemes;

(c) if so, the fund released to the Hill Councils of Assam during last three years, year-wise, and scheme-wise;

(d) whether Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council have demanded that the councils should be

the implementing agency of all externally funded schemes for the hill areas; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in response to the demand of the Autonomous Hill Councils?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Schemes under the Externally Aided Project for District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) are being implemented in Karbi-Anglong District with 85% credit from the World Bank and 15% grant from the State Government.