

(b) the staff strength in each district on permanent and temporary basis;

(c) whether Kalyan Telecom district have less staff as compared to other Telecom district in the country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) to (d). The information is being collected from the field units and will be furnished in due course.

Stoppage of 'News Tonight' on Primary Channel of Doordarshan

2983. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ :
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether News Bulletin 'News Tonight' has been stopped telecasting from primary channel of Doordarshan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and

(c) the steps taken to restart the same?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Doordarshan decided to discontinue the telecast of the 'News Tonight' programme following the agreement entered into by the producers of the programme for the production of news programmes in Hindi and English for telecast on the foreign channel, 'Star Plus'.

(c) There is no proposal to restart the same at present.

[Translation]

Construction of Air-Strip in Pithoragarh

2984. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering any scheme regarding construction of air-strip in district Pithoragarh of U.P.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for slow progress in the construction of Air-strip; and

(d) the time by which the construction work of this air-strip is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d). No, Sir. However, the State Government of Uttar Pradesh has constructed an air-

strip of dimensions 6000' x 150' suitable for 50 seater aircraft at Pithoragarh.

[English]

Non-Availability of Waiting List Tickets

2985. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that there was no waiting list ticket available in all the trains of New Delhi to Patna, Dhanbad, Howrah etc. during November 4, 1996 to November 15, 1996 and onwards;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government to increase train or providing special train to the passengers as per requirement;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the special train was arranged only on November 8, 15, and 18, 1996 and

(d) the number of touts (reservation broker) were caught and punished by the railways during October, 1996 to November 1996?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Wait-listed tickets were not available by some trains viz. 2382 Poorva Express, 2312 Kalka Mail, 2392 Magadh Express, 2554 Vaishali Express, 2802 Purshotam Express and 5622 North-East Express on some days and in some classes.

(b) and (c). 5 Special trains from New Delhi to Patna on 8th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 18th November, 1996 were arranged. In addition, Poorva Express, Kalka Mail, Rajdhani Express and Shramjeevi Express were also augmented by one coach during this period.

(d) 20 touts were apprehended and prosecuted over Northern Railway during October and November, 1996.

Divisional Railway Office

2986. SHRI SURESH R. JADHAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to alter the decision taken earlier to establish Divisional Railway office at Nanded under South Eastern Railway where mobilization of resources in this connection is remote;

(b) whether the decision is being taken to establish Divisional office at Purna Junction where resources required are available at hand;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Government has decided to set up a Divisional Office at Nanded.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

[Translation]

Microwave Towers

2987. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Microwave Towers targeted to be set-up in the country during the year 1995-96 and 1996-97 for providing telephone facilities, State-wise;

(b) the details of progress achieved upto October, 1996 against above target State-wise; and

(c) whether the Government are facing financial crisis in achieving the said target?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Postal Life Insurance Scheme

2988. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR KHANDELWAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Postal Life Insurance Scheme launched in 1995 is only for the rural population;

(b) if so, whether the premium rates are lower and rates of bonus are higher as compare to LIC;

(c) if so, whether the Government are considering open it for every citizen; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Premium rates are lower. Bonus for Rural Postal Life Insurance is yet to be declared after valuation of Rural Post Office Insurance Fund.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The scheme, as its name 'Rural Postal Life insurance' indicated, is meant for the rural folk only. Therefore, as a matter of policy, it cannot be opened for every citizen.

Introduction of New Train From New Delhi to Manmad

2989. SHRI TARIQ ANWER : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to start a new train from New Delhi to Manmad, near Shirdi to facilitate the increasing number of pilgrims to Shirdi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Due to operational and resource constraints.

[Translation]

Construction of Bridge over River Ganga

2990. SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to construct a bridge over river Ganges with a view to link Khagaria and Munger towns; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the time by which construction work is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Railway Tracks between Virar and Dahanu

2991. SHRI SURESH PRABHU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the time by which the work in respect of the four tracks railway line between Virar and Dahanu is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : At present there is no proposal for quadrupling of lines between Virar and Dahanu Road.

Automatic Telephone Exchanges

2992. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of automatic telephone exchanges functioning in Karnataka as on September 30, 1996, district-wise, location-wise and capacity-wise;

(b) the number of new automatic telephone exchanges proposed to be set up in Karnataka during 1996-97; and

(c) the amount allocated therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) The number of automatic telephone exchanges functioning in Karnataka as on September 30, 1996 is 2036. Details are indicated at in the enclosed statement.

(b) The number of new automatic telephone exchanges proposed to be set up in Karnataka during 1996-97 is 69.

(c) Amount allocated for 1996-97 is Rs. 323.92 crores.