

30. All tenancies, hereinafter created, should be exempted from rent control.

Closure of Sale Centre at Pondicherry

3074. SHRI S. ARUMUGHAM : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Steel Authority of India Limited is going to close down its sales centre at Pondicherry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government are aware that it will affect the interests of Small Scale Industries and work of building construction in Pondicherry as the rate of sales tax is 1% in Pondicherry and 4% at Chennai; and

(d) if so, the measures propose to be taken by the Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) to (d) Operation of a Consignment Agency Outlet at Pondicherry was not found to be commercial viable and as such the same has been closed down by steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) in the month of November, 1998.

The requirements of the Customers located at pondicherry are met by SAIL through its Branch Sales Office at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Modernisation of Telecommunication System

3075. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Government for the modernisation of telecommunication system in Railways so far, sector-wise;

(b) the investment made therein;

(c) the fund earmarked therefor during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(d) whether private sector has been participated; and

(e) if so, the extent thereof?

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) As a part of modernisation of Telecommunication, Railways have provided electronic exchanges, digital Microwave links and Optical Fibre cable. Sectorwise details are given in attached Statement-I

(b) Year wise investment of last 5 years is given in attached Statement-II

(c) The IX Five Year Plan is yet to be finalised by the Planning Commission. Railways expect an outlay of approximately Rs. 1600 Crores on Signal & Safety Plan Head. Telecommunication being part of same Head.

(d) Not so far. However, participation of Private Sector has been planned for provision of Optical Fibre cable under "Build, Own, Operate and Lease (BOOL)" scheme. With this scheme it will be possible to modernise Railway's Telecommunication network.

(e) Under BOOL scheme about 20,000 Kms of Optical Fibre Cable costing about Rs.1800 crores has planned for laying along the Railway track.

Statement-I

Sector/Zonal wise detail on Modernisation of Telecommunication System

Railway	Electronic Exchange (No. of lines)	Digital Microwave Links (Kms)	Optical Fibre Cable (Kms)
Central	21,550	275	784
Eastern	12,340	0	210
Northern	33,394	995	81
Northeastern	8,988	0	0
Northeast	3,252	0	0
Frontier			
Southern	5,432	629	0
South Central	12,044	502	0
South Eastern	9,544	0	335
Western	36,077	613	63
TOTAL	142,621	3,014	1,473

Statement-II

Yearwise Investment on Modernisation of Telecommunication in the last Five Years

Year	Investment (Rs. Crores)
1993-'94	64.11
1994-'95	66.90
1995-'96	71.53
1996-'97	55.47
1997-'98	70.63
TOTAL	328.64