

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) The Basic Telephone Service Operators had made specific commitments relating to provisioning of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) at the time of submitting their bids and these commitments stand. However, their Association has suggested certain modalities to implement the VPTs programmes. These are being examined in the Department of Telecommunications.

Expenditure on National Highway-31A

1778. SHRI BHIM DAHAL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the expenditure incurred on the repair of National Highway Number-31A during the last two years;

(b) whether the Government have conducted any enquiry regarding its maintenance;

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve its dilapidated condition; and

(d) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN) :
(a) Expenditure incurred is as under :—

Sl.No.	Year	Amount
1.	1996-97	Rs. 87.41 lakhs
2.	1997-98	Rs. 105.65 lakhs

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) However, National Highway is being kept in traffic worthy conditions within the available resources.

'Sal Keter Menace in Forests'

1779. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the forests protected under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in some districts of Madhya Pradesh and Kanha National Park have been affected by Sal Keter;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether any action plan has been prepared to protect those Forest and National park from this menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Supply of Study Material by IGNOU

1780. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether study material for the BCA/MCA and other courses through correspondence is provided only two and a half months before the examination by Regional Office, Tuglakabad of Indira Gandhi National Open University;

(b) if so, whether despite fees being charged from the students to provide the study material at their residences, the same is not being done; and

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to send the study material in time and at the residences of students?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) to (c) According to the information furnished by the Indira Gandhi National Open University, the academic programmes are offered either on annual or semester basis and the materials for the programmes are sent at the commencement of the academic session/semester in January/July of each year. However, during 1998, (for the programme started in January) the despatch of the study material for the programmes in Computer Applications and Management was delayed for about two and half months due to the increase in the number of students enrollment and delay in the printing of the study material and its distribution. Ordinarily, the University sends to the students the study material at the address given by the applicant. However, on account of large number of complaints received from students for non-receipt/late receipt of material, the University has been considering alternate methods of distribution. In some cases where there was large concentration of students, they were advised to collect the study material from the designated centres to avoid loss of time and material. Where the students were unable to do so, the materials were despatched to them by post. It is the endeavour of the University to ensure that students get the study material at the commencement of each semester and the University is streamlining the distribution system for this purpose.