

(c) how the Government propose to deal with the electronic voting machines purchased at a cost of Rs.75 crores;

(d) whether there is any proposal to use these machines in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council elections;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As necessary amendments to the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 to provide for use of these machines could not be made ready before the last elections, they were not used in these elections.

(c) The electronic voting machines are proposed to be used shortly.

(d) to (f). No, Sir. Electronic voting machines have been designed for use in cases of elections on the basis of "First-past the post" and not in cases of elections on the basis of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote which is used for elections to Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils.

Closure of Overseas Offices of S.T.C

2709. SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has closed some of its overseas offices; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). Yes Sir. Based on review exercise undertaken on its foreign offices, STC has closed down its offices located at Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, Jeddah, Nairobi and Kuwait as the performance of these offices was found functionally non-viable. However, STC has decided to open a new Office at Dubai (UAD).

New Scheme to Engage Private Buses on City Routes in Delhi

2710. SHRI JEEWAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether an advance of Rs. 50,000 per bus is being demanded from the private operators who wish to get their buses engaged on city routes in Delhi under the new scheme;

(b) if so, the details of the new scheme; and

(c) the reasons for asking for such huge sum of money in advance?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c). The State Transport Authority, Delhi has formulated a scheme for grant of 3000 stage carriage permits to the private operators on certain city routes in Delhi at fare rates higher than that of DTC. This scheme is still under consideration of the Delhi Administration and therefore the question of any advance being demanded from the private operators does not arise.