

Increase of Air Fare

370. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have a proposal to give subsidy to long distance passengers who are affected by the steep increase in the fares; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Telephones in Rural Areas

371. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY :
SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have not succeeded in achieving the target of connecting the rural areas with telephones;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the total amount spent on setting up telephone exchanges in rural areas during the last two years, circle-wise;

(d) the progress made during the above period, state-wise;

(e) the time by which telecommunication system is likely to be provided in all the villages of the country, State-wise;

(f) whether priority has been given to backward States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) There has been a shortfall in provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in Rural Areas.

(b) The shortfall is mainly due to delay in supply of equipment and accessories by the supplier.

(c) The information is being collected and would be laid on the table of the House.

(d) The information regarding the progress made is given in enclosed Statement.

(e) All the villages of the country are planned to be provided with VPTs during IXth Plan.

(f) and (g). All villages are to be covered. There is no such policy to give priority.

STATEMENT

Circle-wise details of achievements of Rural Telephone connections during 1994-95 and 1995-96

S.No.	Circle	1994-95	1995-96
		Total Gross Lines	Total Gross Lines
1.	Andhra Pradesh	23932	46240
2.	Andaman and Nicobar	505	1456
3.	Assam	9168	7872
4.	Bihar	11424	14400
5.	Gujarat	52224	20708
6.	Haryana	19304	11368
7.	Himachal Pradesh	18684	37040
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	4580	4984
9.	Karnataka	61760	28456
10.	Kerala	14202	51550
11.	Madhya Pradesh	63704	20584
12.	Maharashtra	52610	71072
13.	North-East	6480	10256
14.	Orissa	5272	7432
15.	Punjab	23224	15576
16.	Rajasthan	59568	20308
17.	Tamilnadu	56571	55030
18.	Uttar Pradesh (E)	24500	18120
19.	Uttar Pradesh (W)	0	20142
20.	West Bengal	27728	31210
Total		535440	493804

Inclusion of Ayodhya in the Important Tourist Places

372. DR. RAMVILAS VEDANTI : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh has been included in the list of important tourist places;

(b) if so, the arrangements made for the beautification of Ayodhya and the details regarding development works; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) to (c). Identification of Tourist Spots is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. The Department of Tourism, however provides funds for specific projects on the basis of their merits, inter-se priority and availability of funds. During 1991-92, the Department of

Tourism provided funds for construction of Yatri Niwas at Ayodhya.

Telecom Circle Office in Purnea

373. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN Alias PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is no telecom circle office in Purnea, in Bihar;

(b) whether the Government propose to set up telecom circle office there;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) There is no Telecom. Circle office at Purnea.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) In accordance with the policy of the Department the Circle Office is generally located at the State capital. Accordingly the Circle office for the Bihar Telecom Circle is located at Patna. However, a Sub-Division Engineer is located at Purnea.

[English]

Cell Phones to Central Officials

374. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government attention has been invited to the news item captioned "Central officials to get cell-phones" appearing in the 'The Hindu-Business Line', New Delhi dated September 19, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the anticipated revenue which the Telecommunications Department is likely to earn as a result of this facility;

(d) the measures taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that this facility is not misused; and

(e) whether the above facility is also proposed to be provided to the officers of Telecommunications Department; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Ministries/ Departments in the Government of India may purchase and use Cellular phones on a selective basis with due regard to the need for economy in Government expenditure. Such proposals are to be cleared by Screening Committee vide Cabinet Secretariat O.M. No. 223/5/1/96-OA-IV dated 9th July, 96.

(c) Since Cellular Mobile Telephone Service is not operated by Department of Telecom., no revenue is likely to accrue directly to the department on account of this facility.

(d) The procedure of clearing the proposals by the high level Screening Committee mentioned at (a) above will take care that the facility is not misused.

(e) and (f). At present, Cell-phones are not provided to the officers of Telecom. Department. However, when cell-phones are provided as per (a) and (b) above, the officers of Telecom. Department will also be covered within the ambit of the guidelines.

[Translation]

Death of Workers in Bokaro Steel Plant

375. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of employees in Bokaro Steel Plant died while switching on the bulb in the steam line of Bokaro Steel Plant;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such type of blast also took place in the past;

(d) if so, the number of such incidents took place in the BSP during each of the last three years and during the current year;

(e) the compensation provided to the family of victims; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to prevent such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b). The steam collector of Boiler No. 4 (SMS-1) had ruptured on 16-10-96 at 20.30 hours leading to steam leakage as a result of which two BSL employees working nearby (operating the valve to the steam collector) got serious burn injuries and succumbed to their injuries.

(c) No such accident has taken place in the Steam collector in the past.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (c) above.

(e) Apart from employment to one of the direct dependents of the aforesaid employees and payment of Provident Fund and Gratuity, payments have also been made under workmen's compensation, group insurance, employee family benefit scheme and life cover scheme.

(f) To prevent recurrence of such incidents, a number of steps have been taken such as residual life analysis test of the steam pipe, the existing steam line where the rupture took place has been kept out of service, on the job training to the boiler operators is being imparted, etc.