

you elanguate the word 'delay' it will be a long delay and if you say it is short it will be shortened. The scheme was to be completed in October 1995 but when it has not been completed I have appointed the Director General of Civil Aviation fifteen days back to ascertain the reasons for the delay, whether the fault is ours or of Rathan Company. If the fault is of the company how will they compensate the loss suffered by us and what action should be taken against them. I have appointed the Director General of Civil Aviation just fifteen days back and as soon as his report is received I will inform you.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This has been discussed in the House earlier. Let us go to Question No. 302.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We had a full debate on this under Rule 193.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Sir, the word 'Bombay' has been used. Very often it should be corrected as 'Mumbai'.

MR. SPEAKER : All right. That will be corrected.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, we had a discussion under Rule 193. Q.No. 302, Shri Harin Pathak.

National Technology Mission

*302. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether National Technology Mission launched in 1986 has achieved its goals;

(b) if so, the number of digital trunk and automatic exchanges modernised, the number of public telephones in urban areas with STD/ISD facilities installed and the number of Directory Enquiry and Fault Repair Service in major cities computerised; and

(c) the mechanism of providing STD/ISD Public Telephones in urban as well as rural areas?

[Translation]

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

(b) The details are furnished as under :

- (i) No. of digital/SPC trunk automatic exchanges: 323 (as on date)
- (ii) No. of automatic exchanges modernised: 8424 (from 1.4.1992 to 31.3.1996)
- (iii) Public Telephones with STD/ISD facility: 1,40,195 (as on (31.10.1996)

(iv) Directory Enquiry Service in Major cities that have been computerised : 75 (as on 31.10.1996)

(v) Fault Repair Service that have been computerised : 65 (as on 31.10.1996)

(c) The STD/ISD PCOs are allotted to educated (at least Matric/High School Pass in urban areas and 8th Pass in rural areas) and unemployed persons. STD/ISD PCOs to eligible applicants are allotted by STD PCO allotment committees constituted one for each Secondary Switching Area.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House may be agree with me that no subscriber is happy and satisfied with telecom services in the country. Whatever be the claims of Hon'ble Minister or Telecom Ministry, today the position in the country is that no subscriber is satisfied with the telecom services. Your Ministry launches new schemes, new drives from time to time. Recently a 'Mission Better Communication' drive has been launched by the ministry. However a lot of things can be said about the scheme as well as the difficulties being faced by the subscribers. But I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister through you as to how many old electro-mechanical exchanges are functioning in the country and the number out of them which have been converted into modern digital electronics exchange under your 'mission better communication' and modernisation scheme along with the number of exchanges yet to be converted into electronic exchange. This is my first supplementary question which I would like to ask.

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question asked by Pathak ji was related with the establishment of a Technology mission in 1986 which had six Parameters and it was also included in but it that the manual based exchange would also be converted into automatic one. As per my information, at present in all district headquarters electronic exchanges have been converted into automatic exchanges and the progress is going on rapidly. We are also trying our best to convert the manual exchanges as early as possible. We have chalked out a scheme for this year and as per this scheme in some backward areas particularly of Eastern Uttar Pradesh which is quite a vast area, electronic exchanges would be set up by the end of the year.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to have your support and would like to draw your attention towards the question I have asked. It seems to me that Hon'ble Minister is not replying properly. What I have asked is this

[English]

whether National Technology Mission launched in 1986 has achieved its goals?"

[Translation]

In his reply Hon'ble Minister says - "Yes Sir". I am not agree with it because I am the member of the House for the last eight years. No department can claim today that they have achieved the target fixed by them earlier. In the reply of first part of my question the Hon'ble Minister says - "yes, Sir". I have got with me the annual report of the telecommunication department. Figures are given in the report. It has been catagorically stated in the report that there are such 40 percent mechanical exchanges which have not been converted into digital exchanges. It seems that Hon'ble Minister is trying to avoid my question. My question was straight forward whether the target has been achieved or not. Hon'ble Minister told 'yes sir' which does not seem proper. Therefore I request the Hon'ble Minister to reply my question after going through it thoroughly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the second part of my supplementary question is that the then Prime Minister Narasimha Raoji had made an announcement in October 1994 for the educated unemployed that if they would apply, S.T.D. - P.C.O. would be allotted to them on priority basis. I belong to Karunawati. Hon'ble Minister said that the work is going on there. According to the figures which I have, 24 thousand persons have applied for allotment of S.T.D. P.C.Os there under the scheme - but it has been allotted perhaps only to 1500 persons. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister regarding the position of the fake scheme which has been launched in the name of educated unemployed. Thousands of applications are lying pending in each state and city under the scheme.

As per Scheme it has been ensured that on submitting the application one would be allotted the S.T.D/P.C.O. By when you are going to allot them STD and P.C.O. and whether you are going to prepare any time bound programme to ensure that STD-PCO would be allotted to all within the time frame?

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Sir, there are 750 electro mechanical exchanges and 20715 electronic exchanges functioning at present. So there is definitely an improvement in this regard.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker Sir, Hon'ble Minister has replied "Yes Sir" that's why I had objection because the goal has not been achieved so far.

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : My reply is correct. Please listen to me first. The mission which was prepared in 1986 had fix Parameters - improvement in service, increase the urban Public telephones, to improve the delivery of telegrams, to provide telex on demand, improvement in rural communication, creation of national digital network. These are continuous process. I had replied these in affirmative we are progressing continuously. That's why I have replied this. My answer is not wrong. So far as your question regarding conversion of electro mechanical exchange into automatic one is concerned you said that there has not

been much improvement in that. According to the figures available with me there are only 750 electro mechanical exchanges and 20,175 electronic exchange functioning in the country at present. We would reduce the numbers thereof by the end of the year.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my second supplementary question was related to educated unemployed. It has not been answered so far.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is much more important.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : It is not the responsibility of my department to chalk out or enforce the scheme for providing employment to the educated unemployed or uneducated unemployed.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : It is not your responsibility. Hon'ble Prime Minister had made an announcement in the House. (Interruptions)

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : You please listen to my complete answer first. We have our rules regarding allotment of P.C.Os. We have made it clear that it would be allotted only to the people who have passed high school or passed the eighth class. All these P.C.Os. would be allotted only to those people, our target for the current year was to provide one P.C.O. for the population of 600 in the urban area. In this way maximum possible number of unemployed people will get employment through it.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Mr. Speaker Sir, I have not been able to make understand my points to the Hon'ble Minister. Hon'ble Prime Minister had made the announcement not regarding S.T.D. and P.C.Os rather he had announced the scheme regarding educated unemployed that they should demand for S.T.D. booths by making an application within three months from September 1994. Thousands of people have filled up forms under the scheme. I am not saying about P.C.O. but S.T.D. P.C.O. is a separate matter. (Interruptions)

SHRI ANANT GUDHE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Minister has said that 1,40,195 connections of S.T.D./P.C.O. have been allotted to general Public. My question is that what are the norms for allotment of Public S.T.D. in cities? What are the rules for it? S.T.D. booths are allotted just by a distance of 100 feet. Where there should be 30 telephone booths, 200 general telephones are existing. Are there no norms prescribed for it? My second question is that my constituency Amrawati is a metropolitan constituency. Metropolitan corporation is also there. There are functioning two types of system - electronic and non electronic system. Lines are not connected when dialed through electronic system to non electronic system and vice-versa. My question is that the proposal which is lying in your ministry regarding setting up electronic system in the entire city would be completed or not?

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : As I have said earlier that the new scheme of the department was accepted in 1994. At that time the target fixed was that one P.C.O. would be allotted for the population of 500 but as private operators are not getting their way into it hence DOT is making efforts for it. As per the efforts made by an agreement would be reached on 600 by the end of the year. It is not far away. One P.C.O. would be allotted on 600...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is why, I should not allow any more supplementaries.

(Interruptions)

SHRI A.C. JOS : Sir, the Question is different, the answer is different. Will you kindly give a direction to the Minister to reply properly?

MR. SPEAKER : You have not heard the full answer. How can you come to that conclusion? You first listen to the Minister.

SHRI A.C. JOS : After listening to the Minister, I find that they are not answering questions properly. The questions is different, the answer is different.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : The question is that P.C.O. has been set up in a very close proximity. Our target was to set it up for the population of 500. One P.C.O. would be set up for the population of 600 by the end of the year. Previously our target was to set up a P.C.O. for the population of 500 by the end of 1997 but the target is not being achieved. You have said about your constituency. The question is not for the constituency but you give it in writing separately. We will consider that seriously...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I know that it is important. But it is not possible.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

Telephone Tapping

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*304. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI VIJAY GOEL :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to amend Telegraph Act, 1885 so that the tapping of telephones of political leaders, political parties, journalists and social workers and censoring of their letters may be checked keeping in view such allegations being made from time to time; and

(b) if so, the progress made in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir, there is no proposal to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 with regard to tapping of telephones as enough safeguards are available in Section 5 of the Act. Censoring of letters is not governed by Indian Telegraph Act.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to this very important subject. He has given a reply that he has no proposal to amend this Act.

As we all know, even as per the Indian Telegraph Act, 1865, the Government has got the right to have the tapping in the interests of sovereignty, integrity and also security of the country or for maintaining public order or for preventing incitement of offences. No doubt, this is a good point. But, at the same time, there are so many occasions where the tappings have taken place, allegations and counter allegations have been made on political leaders, executives and various other persons.

Recently, as we all know, hon. former Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's telephone was tapped. It is a big allegation and the hon. Prime Minister had ordered a C.B.I. inquiry also.

Now, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, as on today, about the state of that inquiry of C.B.I. which was ordered in the case of the former Prime Minister's telephone tapping. This is my first Supplementary question.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Sir, during the last few days, after publishing a news item in the newspapers a demand was raised that telephones of some leaders are being taped. Prime Minister handed over its enquiry to the C.B.I. and the CBI has also given its report to the Prime Minister. As per report the news that was published in the newspaper, was found as baseless.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : So, the House can take the guarantee.

My second question is that the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 is too old. It was actually introduced before Independence. Now, with the present modern system, modern philosophy and modern civilisation, it is the right time to consider to amend the present Act. But I am rather surprised that the hon. Minister gives a reply that he has no plan to amend it.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether, in view of the fact that allegations and counter allegations