

[English]

Mr. Minister, your Ministry may not be dealing with furnace oil...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM SAGAR : The hon'ble Member has used unparliamentary term, it should be expunged.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It shall be expunged from the record.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please maintain decorum. Your Ministry may not be dealing with furnace oil. It may have been supplied by the Ministry of Petroleum. Either you say that you are not aware of it or ...

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the unparliamentary term should be expunged from the proceeding of the House.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It has already been expunged.

[English]

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : Furnace oil is looked after by the Ministry of Petroleum and not by the Ministry of Mines. Regarding granite, my conception is hundred per cent correct.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Since furnace oil is dealt with by another Ministry and not by your Ministry, let the question go to that Ministry.

SHRI S. BANGRAPPA : The question relates to quarrying of granite. It has got two aspects. The first aspect relates to the general policy framework and the other is regarding quarrying of granite in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. It is a common scene in our country, even in the State of Karnataka. Quarrying of granite is going on. Different varieties of coloured granite are being quarried even in the mines of Karnataka. The environmentalists and ecologists have put forward their case saying that illegal or even legal quarrying of granite throughout the country, particularly in the State of Karnataka, has resulted in an ecological imbalance. Has the Government taken note of this matter seriously and is it taking steps to stop illegal quarrying? Though it is a State subject, will the Minister take proper steps to check illegal quarrying and also to have a control over legal quarrying so as to see that the environmental matter is not touched as it has resulted in an ecological imbalance?

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : I agree with the hon. Member that the granite industry in our country has adopted the traditional method of quarrying.

Whenever we follow the traditional method, there is always scope for environmental or ecological problems to come up. Although it is a State subject, the Ministry of Mines has taken some steps in this regard and some guideline are being prepared in consultation with the State Government.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there is huge reserve of granite in Madhya Pradesh. Granite is found in abundance in many districts of Madhya Pradesh. You have set up a Granite Development Council which has held only one sitting in 1995. I want to know whether you would call its meeting to frame a timebound policy and to remove difficulties in the process of its export in order to have maximum production of granite so that more foreign exchange can be earned. Whether you are considering to call a meeting of the Granite Development Council or to take any other measures for this purpose?

[English]

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : I am extremely happy to inform the House that the Ministry of Mines is going to convene a Minister level State Mining Conference which is going to be held in Delhi on 26th and 27th December.

Villages without Post Offices

*202. *SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK :
SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of villages without post offices in Orissa during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97, till now;

(b) the number of villages in the State having post offices, district-wise, category-wise; and

(c) the number of post offices proposed to be opened during 1996-97 in the State, district-wise, category-wise?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) The number of villages without Post Offices in Orissa during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 till now is given below :

Year	No. of Villages Without Post Offices
1994-95	39418
1995-96	39418
1996-97	39412

(b) The number of villages in the State having Post Offices is given district-wise and category-wise in attached Statement-I.

(c) There is a target to open 4 Departmental Sub Post Offices and 4 Extra Departmental Branch Post

Offices in Orissa during 1996-97. The district wise and category-wise details of Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices sanctioned so far are given in attached Statement-II. No Departmental Sub Post Office has been sanctioned so far.

STATEMENT - I

Number of Villages in Orissa Circle having Post Offices District-wise and Category-wise

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Total Number of villages with Post Offices	Number of villages having Depttl. Sub-Post Office	Number of villages having Extra Depttl. Sub- Post Office	Number of villages having extra Depttl. Branch Post Office
1.	Angul	223	17	07	199
2.	Balasore	469	41	06	422
3.	Bargarh	206	20	02	184
4.	Boudh	113	10	-	103
5.	Bhadrak	306	33	06	267
6.	Balangir	257	21	05	231
7.	Cuttack	304	39	21	244
8.	Deogargh	37	02	-	35
9.	Dhenkanal	221	18	09	194
10.	Gajapati	139	12	-	127
11.	Ganjam	602	46	17	539
12.	Jagatsinghpur	230	24	05	201
13.	Jajpur	287	29	18	240
14.	Jharsuguda	80	09	02	69
15.	Kalahandi	285	20	06	259
16.	Kendrapara	261	31	20	210
17.	Keonjhar	415	27	09	379
18.	Malkangiri	82	08	01	73
19.	Khurda	213	17	05	191
20.	Korapur	221	17	-	204
21.	Mayurbhanj	678	60	04	614
22.	Nowrangpur	174	14	-	160
23.	Nayagarh	201	22	01	178
24.	Nuapara	105	05	05	95
25.	Phulbani	259	20	03	236
26.	Puri	270	24	06	240
27.	Rayagada	190	14	-	176
28.	Sambalpur	212	12	04	196
29.	Subarnpur	89	05	03	81
30.	Sundargarh	347	35	08	304
	Total	7476	652	173	6651

STATEMENT - II

The District-wise & Category-wise Details of Post Offices sanctioned in Orissa during 1996-97, so far

Sl. No.	Name of District	Depttl. Sub-Post Offices	Extra Departmental Branch Post Office
1.	Cuttack	-	Fakirpura
2.	Keonjhar	-	Baiganipal
3.	Kalahandi	-	Malagurda
4.	Jagatsinghpur	-	Khalgaon
5.	Sundargarh	-	Tulsokoni
6.	Ganjam	-	Morabai

[English]

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given a list, and I am not satisfied with his reply. In Bolangir District of Orissa, there are 274 gram Panchayats. We have been raising this issue from time to time but till today Post Offices have not been opened in all the backward areas in Bolangir District. The hon. Minister is very efficient and his attitude is good for development. I would like to know from him whether the Government is going to open the maximum possible number of Post Offices in Bolangir District of Orissa.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Some norms have been fixed for opening post offices. Population and distance are taken into consideration. However, we do not have the required number of post offices in the whole country as per these norms. In Orissa, only 8072 post offices are operating out of which 7476 post-offices are in the rural areas. In Orissa each post office is serving 3922 people covering the area of 19.28 sq. km. Thus the postal service in Orissa is somewhat better in comparison to all India level. However, if the hon'ble Member wants to give any suggestion in regards to a particular post office, he can give it to me. We shall try to do the best within our financial and statutory limits

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK : Thank you very much. As the hon. Minister has already told that he would like to give sanction for opening post offices in our Boangir District Parliamentary Constituency, under the existing provision, but there is not any post office in and around big villages of the district. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that if a proposal for opening post offices in Bolangir and Navapara districts is made, he will consider that or not?

SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I have already told that the post office is opened at the distance of three kilometers and the population of that area should be 3000 and the loss on the expenditure incurred on opening of the post office should not be

more than 33.5%. Again I would like to say that there are not the required number of post offices in the country as per the norms of the Department, yet you may give your suggestion in this regard and accordingly action will be taken within those limits.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there is always some kind of problem on the part of the Department of communications that the site is not available for opening of post-offices. The department says that it is prepared to open a post office if the site is made available. I would like to mention that there budget is so less that they are unable to obtain any land. I would like to ask whether the hon. Minister will consider to increase the amount of budget for purchase of land in view of the price rise and increase of cost of land and will the department bear the responsibility instead of passing it on other. I can understand these kinds of problems are there in my constituency where the existing post offices have been closed on the ground that there is no space available for those post offices and whenever we talk of opening new post offices we are told to provide space for that.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This question is relating to Orissa but hon. Member has asked a general question.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : There is a problem of non-availability of space.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Yes, I agree

SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I personally respect of hon. Member. She herself has pointed out our problem. In this regard I would like to say that this department is always facing problems and that this is a department which occurs losses. During the Eighth Five Year Plan, a target was fixed for opening 3000 branch post offices and 100 additional departmental post offices which was revised to 3600 additional departmental post offices and 650 departmental sub-post offices by the Planning Commission. Perhaps, later on the Ministry of Finance reduced this target and restricted this limit to 1440 additional departmental post offices and an amount of

Rs. 23.654 crores was allocated for this purpose. During the Eighth Five Year Plan 1481 additional departmental branch post offices and 372 departmental post offices have been opened till now. Out of these 90 additional departmental post-offices and 12 departmental sub-post offices have been opened in Orissa alone.

The hon. Member has rightly said that this department is facing financial problem and funds allocated by the Planning Commission, was further, curtailed by the Ministry of Finance. This plan period is now going to an end. We will try to consider your suggestions seriously in the next financial year.

[English]

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, from the figures that the hon. Minister has given relating to the State of Orissa, it can be seen that there is no progress in increasing the number of post offices. Similar is the case with other states, particularly, the State of Maharashtra.

On the one hand the Government is taking up communication in a big way and on the other hand no progress is made.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question relates to Orissa.

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Sir, I am talking about Orissa only. So, I would like to know if the Government has stopped all planning to open post offices in every village with 1000 population. If so, what is the modus operandi for establishing such Post Offices?

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA : Sir, the largest network of post offices in the world is in India. Although China has more population than India. As per information given to me there are only 52,000 post offices whereas in our country there are about 1,53,000 post offices. However modernisation is yet to be done and the required services are to be provided. Therefore some improvement is needed. Hon. Member has asked about the norms. These norms include population of 3000, distance of three kilometer and loss not more than 33.5 per cent. In remote areas further reduction of 550 in the population can be made.

KUMARI SELJA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, though this question relates to Orissa, but I also want to ask a general question for opening additional post offices in my constituency. I have also tried many times but every time the department showed its helplessness. Just now while replying the question of Shrimati Sushma Swaraj the Minister has told that there is shortage of funds. We know it and would like to help them. I am sure that the whole House will agree to my point that when so many schemes are run through post offices, there are so many schemes for women and funds are allocated for those schemes. I request the Government to pay attention to it and consider this issue in priority area so

that more post offices can be opened. We have seen that even after fulfilment of the required criteria these post offices are not being opened. I, therefore, urge that hon. Minister should take firm initiative in this direction and we are ready to give him our support. My question is that whether more and more post offices will be opened?

SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA : We will certainly do that. We are here to make efforts.

[English]

Top Priority to Air Safety

203. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV.
DR T.SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have given top priority to air safety.

(b) if so, the steps taken being taken by the Government in this regard.

(c) the allocation made for this purpose during 1995-96, 1996-97, and

(d) the results achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the Sabha

STATEMENT

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Air Marshal J.K. Seth (Retd) to review the existing set up of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Aircraft Act, 1934, Aircraft Rules, 1937 and various Safety Regulations to ensure air safety. In addition, steps such as safety audit of operators, implementation of recommendations emanating from investigation of aircraft accidents etc. are continuously taken to enhance the level of air safety.

(c) During the financial year 1995-96, Rs.1.61 crores were spent under Plan Schemes by Directorate General of Civil Aviation to enhance the level of air safety and during the current financial year i.e. 1996-97, a total of Rs. 2.90 crores have been allocated for the purpose.

(d) There has been an improvement in aviation safety. The number of aircraft accidents have progressively decreased during the last 4 years.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, in recent times, there was an accident which occurred near Delhi costing more than 351 lives. Such accidents had occurred in the past also. In the last two or three