

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in the matter;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the number of officials involved in the scandal and action taken against them?

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

(b) The news item contains different cases like fraudulent collection and payment of telephone bills, illegal transfer of lines to unscrupulous PCO operators, misuse of residential service telephone etc. All such cases are investigated.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Departmental investigations have been conducted. On the basis of investigation three officials have been identified to be involved in the case of fraud involving collection and payment for telephone bills. Two of them have been issued chargesheets for major penalty under departmental rules and the case of issuing charge sheet to the third official is under process. Two cases of illegal transfer of lines/misuse by unscrupulous PCO operators have been referred to CBI for thorough investigation. During investigation one case of misuse of residential service telephone to the tune of Rs. 3 lakh by one telecom official was found and necessary action for recovery is being taken.

[Translation]

Sub Standard Essential Services

3634. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :
SHRI KASHIRAM RANA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the sub standard essential services in Post, Telegraph and telecommunications areas in Gujarat circle ; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government for the improvement in the essential services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Essential services of the Post, Telegraph and Telecommunication services in Gujarat are generally satisfactory. However, there are occasional instances of delays to mails due to various reasons like natural calamities, transpiration bottlenecks, receipt of sudden and exceptionally heavy volume of mails etc.

(b) Instructions are issued from time to time to the inspecting staff to make surprise visits and through an effective inspection process to monitor and improve mail, delivery arrangements and ensure proper financing of post offices. Transmission and delivery of mails, money orders, telegraph services, Telecommunication services are continuously

motored at various levels and corrective measures taken to remove deficiencies. In order to improve quality of services and to give adequate attention to public grievances counter operations in important post offices have been computerised and facilitation counters and Customer care Centres have been opened.

[English].

Use of Old and Dilapidated Coaches

3685. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that old and dilapidated compartments are being used for the trains in Kerala;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to replace these old bogies;

(c) whether there is any proposal to send new compartments bogies to the State of Kerala; and

(d) if so, the number of bogies proposed to be sent and the time by which they are likely to reach Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) The coaches used on trains in Kerala are from a younger age group and none of these coaches is overaged. Age profile indicated that more than 70% of coaches running on trains in Kerala are well below mid life.

(b) to (d) About 160 new coaches have been inducted into Kerala region during the first quarter of 96-97. New coaches have been provided on important trains like Kerala Express, Netravati Express etc. Phased replacement of coaches running in Kerala will be continued subject to availability of resources.

Stoppage of Jodhpur Express

3686 . SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to provide stoppage of Jodhpur Express and Bokaro Shatabdi. Express trains at Raniganj and Himgiri Express at Durgapur;

(b) if so, the time by which the said stoppages are likely to be provided; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Availability of alternative services to cater to the present pattern and volume of traffic.