

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

### LOK SABHA

Thursday, May 8, 1997/Vaisakha 18, 1919 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at two minutes  
past Eleven of the Clock*

[COL. RAO RAM SINGH *in the Chair*]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

#### Telephone to Sub Divisional Hqrs.

\*461. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of the Government to provide telephone facility to sub-divisional headquarters;

(b) the date from which the above policy has been implemented;

(c) the number of Sub-Divisional Headquarters in Bihar where telephone facility has not been provided so far Districtwise; and

(d) the time by which telephone facility is likely to be provided to these Headquarters?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The objectives of Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) included provisions of STD connectivity to Sub Divisional Headquarters by 1st April, 1995. As on date, 1146 out of 1206 Sub Divisional Headquarters have been provided with STD connectivity.

(c) All the Sub Divisional Headquarters in Bihar have been provided with Telephone facility and STD connectivity.

(d) Question does not arise in view of (c) above.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the shape of my question has been completely changed. The question which I had asked was very clear. That could be seen from my original question given to the Secretariat. My question was regarding the policy of the Government to provide telephone facility at block headquarters. But the answer given is about the sub-divisional headquarters. Thus the shape of my question has been changed. Sir, I want an answer from hon. Minister through you that there should be a telephone exchange at block level. My question in Hindi is very clear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have asked about sub-divisional headquarters and not about the block-level.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is not true. You can go through my original question.

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it seems to be a case of mistranslation.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: It is mistranslated. My question is about the policy of the Government to provide telephone facility at block headquarters.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yadav ji, I will get it checked. But the question which is now before the House is related to sub-divisional headquarters.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, that is not my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If hon. Minister could tell something about block level, kindly tell that.

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): Sir, hon. Member has asked information about block level. If it is mistranslated, you will have to ascertain about that. But I do not have information about block-level at present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You kindly sent the information to the hon. Member.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will send it to the hon. Member.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Mr. Chairman, Sir, what about my question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you have asked question about block level, I will get it checked from the question branch of the Lok Sabha Secretariat. At present hon. Minister does not have information about block level. He will send it to you through a letter.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: Could my question be postponed? I want justice from you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You would do get justice. Hon. Minister will send block level position to you in writing. If you want to ask second supplementary now, you can do so.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: it is my request that my question be postponed because in this way I will be deprived of a chance of asking supplementary questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, you will not be deprived of your chance. The information which you have asked for will be supplied to you in writing.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: I cannot ask any

supplementary after getting written reply. My right to ask supplementary is getting eliminated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will get it checked from the Lok Sabha Secretariat whether the question asked by you was related to block level or sub-divisional level.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: If it is related to block-level, I may be given chance again.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: It is a case of mistranslation and whether it was mistranslation or not, you have to take a decision on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will see as to where this mistake has occurred. If you have to ask supplementary, you can do so.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV: When I do not have answer to my original question, what should I ask in second supplementary. If mistake has occurred, would I be given a chance next time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If mistake has occurred, I will bring it to the knowledge of hon. Speaker.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: What about the Panchayat level? ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member has raised a serious issue. However, you have said that you would see what could be done after having checked from the Lok Sabha Secretariat. But I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the policy of the Government in regard to setting up telephone exchange and providing STD facility at the block level. Whether the Government propose to set up exchange at block level alongwith STD facility? If there is any such scheme, the time by which the STD facility would be provided in all block headquarters in Bihar.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us have some order in the House. Please give the hon. Minister a chance to answer the question.

[Translation]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: There are 1206 sub-divisional headquarters all over the country ...*(Interruptions)* out of which 1146 have got the STD facility and all telephonic facilities are available there. In all the sub-divisional headquarters in Bihar ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: No interruptions please. Please give the hon. Minister a chance to reply.

[Translation]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Let me first start with the introduction. In all the sub-divisional headquarters of Bihar, the STD facility is available and the policy for block level has not been formulated as yet. We are going to formulate it later on.

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS: Sir, the Government has taken so many steps to establish a number of exchanges in various places. I would like to know whether it is a fact that fifteen telephone stations out of hundred per month are remaining non-operating and if so whether the Government has any programme to rectify it.

Secondly, I want to know whether the Government has any programme to enhance the consumer facilities by improving the telephone services and if so what is the programme.

[Translation]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: The original question is related to Bihar whereas the hon. Member has asked the question outside Bihar.

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS: Sir, there are so many exchanges in Bihar State also. Let the hon. Minister reply about them.

[Translation]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: I am giving reply to your question. The point raised by the hon. Member about 15 per cent telephone exchanges remaining non-operative, I would like to say that there are many defects in our telephone exchanges at some places but we have taken a decision and we have given top priority to the telephone service in the coming five year plan which includes improving quality. All over the country where telephone facilities are available, there is a scheme to provide such facilities within a radius of one kilometre which is being completed.

SHRI LALMUNI CHAUBEY (BUXAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my question is related to original question about which the Minister has said that it was a case of mistranslation. So long as I remember, Shri Dinesh Chandra ji would have asked the question in Hindi. If this is the mistake of the translation branch of the Lok Sabha secretariat which has changed the meaning of the question, what action would be taken against such translators who cannot translate from Hindi into English, into Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam etc?

The basic question is that it is mistranslated due to the mistake of the Secretariat. The hon. Minister has said this and you have also said so then, it has become a question of propriety of the House. How will we get the answer to that question, how will we know about that and the questions which we asked what would happen to them?

Therefore, I want to know as to how many such mistakes of mistranslation would occur and how long will it continue?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many mistakes will occur further and how long will they occur, you can seek the answer to these questions from an astrologer, I cannot reply to these questions.

SHRI LALMUNI CHAUBEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister has said ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Listen, Lalmuni ji, I have said that if any mistake has occurred, however, it has not been established as yet, the same will be got checked from the question branch of the Lok Sabha. The hon. Member will get the information about block level in writing.

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSHMARIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a mistake after all ...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please take your seat.

*[English]*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in view of the fact that the basic minimum facilities to the poorest of the poor of the country and the people in general are given to them by poverty alleviation programmes and rural development programmes through the network of the Panchayati Raj system all over the country and also since the Panchayati Raj system is now well established under the Constitution of India, will the Government consider, as a policy matter, connecting all the panchayats in the country with telephones within the Ninth Five Year Plan period for directly communicating about the entire management of the rural development programmes in a proper manner so that the grassroot masses get the benefits? Will this suggestion about the policy be considered under the Ninth Plan document?

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Yes, Sir. The Government has already finalised a policy on Village Public Telephones and, according to it the entire villages will be connected by telephones during the Ninth Five Year Plan along with STD facility.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that all sub-divisional headquarters of Bihar have been linked with telephone facility but mere linking will not do. The Government will have to ensure that these telephones work and telephone exchanges function properly. So far as my question is concerned, Sir, there is a telephone exchange at Sekhpura in my area, earlier we used to have direct talk on telephone from Delhi but now that facility does not exist. Therefore, I would like to know whether telephones in sub-division, are working properly and effectively or not? What steps are being taken by the Government to ensure that these telephones work properly and effectively? What action Government are taking to expeditiously rectify those telephone exchanges which are out of order or have developed defects?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ramendra Kumar ji, we have got its reply. The hon. Minister has said that all efforts would be made to rectify all the telephone exchanges.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is not a question of efforts. We want to know that the time by when these would be rectified the Government should tell about that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question, Shri Nitish Kumar.

#### **Increase in Freight Rates**

\*462. SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Railways Hike Freight Rates for Essential Items" appearing in the *Business Standard* dated April 8, 1997;

(b) if so, whether the freights of essential consumer items like foodgrains, pulses, edible oil, salt etc. have been increased since April 1, 1997; and

(c) if so, the percentage of hike in the freight of each essential consumer item made and the total additional annual income likely to be earned on account of it?

*[English]*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

*[Translation]*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we had asked this question that a news item was appeared in the *Business Standard* dated April 8, 1997 under caption, Railways hike freight rates for essential item; and it was further mentioned therein;

*[English]*

"Railways have increased freight rates by 12 per cent for essential commodities from April 1, despite Railways Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan's categorical assurance in his Railway Budget speech that essential commodities were exempted from the increase in freight rates. This hike is applicable to all essential commodities, grains, pulses, oils, salt, onions, potatoes, sugar, vanaspati, jaggery and fodder.

*[Translation]*

It was published in the above paper and as per the answer given by the hon. Minister, he has said 'No Sir' in reply to part 'B' of the question. This means that as per his answer this news item is wrongly published I, particularly want to know that after this news item appeared in the *Economic Newspaper*, whether the Government have published any rebuttal or not. If not, the rebuttal should have been published because this news went down all over