

Statement-I*Details of the improvements in the existing quality and quantity of the postal services in Gujarat Circle*

The following achievements have been made to improve the quality of service.

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| 1. Number of Post Offices modernized | —97 |
| 2. Number of very small aperture terminal (VSAT)/ extended satellite money order (ESMO) installed | —24 |
| 3. Number of multi purpose counter machines installed | —231 |
| 4. Savings Bank Local Area Network Installed | —7 |
| 5. Savings Bank Ctrl. Orgn. computerized | —8 |
| 6. Pay Roll Savings Scheme Computerized | —13 |
| 7. Periodical review of establishment is being carried out regularly to improve quality of service by providing additional staff where justified. | |
| 8. 18 EDBOS and 3 ESOS opened during the year 1997-98. A target of opening of 2 more Departmental Sub Offices and 40 more Extra Departmental Branch Offices fixed for the year 1998-99. | |
| 9. 330 EDBOS have been supplied with upgraded infrastructural equipments during the year 1997-98. 120 more EDBOS will be supplied with infrastructural equipments during the year 1998-99 subject to the availability of funds. | |

Transfer of Valuable Data Base

2904. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a data base containing valuable information on decinal plants, animal and mineral resources of India collected and compiled by a group of scientists and technical staff of National Institute of Science Communications (NISCOM), CSIR, has been transferred to a society called Asian Health and Environment Allied Database (AHEAD);

(b) if so, the reason therefor and the guidelines laid down for transferring the data; and

(c) the constituents and the bye-laws of AHEAD?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The Asian Health and Allied Database (AHEAD) is a consortium of 9 organisations of which 8 are Governmental and 1 is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). These organisations belong to 7 Asian

countries viz. Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, and Mongolia. AHEAD is registered under the Indian Societies' Registration Act. The consortium seeks to bring out and market Asian Health and other related information in modern electronic format based on inputs received from participating members. Member organisations contribute to AHEAD, information and database inputs over which they hold copyright. AHEAD prepares the CD-ROM of the data and holds copyright ownership of it, for which it pays royalties to the contributing organisation. National Institute of Science Communication (NISCOM) contributes two database to AHEAD ie. Wealth of India and Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Abstracts. The AHEAD is supported by funds from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada and NISCOM as lead organisation member has committed to provide infrastructural and a limited technical manpower support.

Construction of Exchange Buildings and Staff Quarters

2905. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR CHOUDHARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the rural exchanges are functioning in a private rented building, not suitable for future expansion and modernisation;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to construct exchange buildings and staff quarters;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASHA): (a) and (b) Most of the rural exchanges are functioning in private rented buildings. In most cases these are suitable for future expansion and modernisation.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) At present there are proposals to construct 1254 exchange buildings and 9311 staff quarters both in rural and urban areas, at various locations, all over the country in phased manner.

(e) Not applicable in view of (d) above.

Out of Turn Allotment of Telephone Booths

2906. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether STD/ISD Telephone booths have been allotted out of turn in the country during the last three years till-date;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the criteria fixed by the Government for the out of turn allotment?