

(a) the number of persons on the waiting list for telephone connections in Ahmedabad, Baroda, Ankleshwar, Surat, Vapi, Surender Nagar, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Porbandar and Bhavnagar in Gujarat ;

(b) the time by which the entire waiting list will be covered and the action being taken in this regard ; and

(c) the number of requests received for opening of new telephone exchange in Gujarat and the time by which the demand will be met ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) The number of persons on the waiting list for telephone connections is given below :

Sr. No.	City	Waiting list as on 31-3-85
1.	Ahmedabad	27173
2.	Baroda	12836
3.	Ankleshwar	550
4.	Surat	19329
5.	Vapi	716
6.	Surendra Nagar	460
7.	Jamnagar	599
8.	Rajkot	7353
9.	Porbandar	182
10.	Bhavnagar	2097

(b) The present waiting list is likely to be cleared progressively during the 7th plan by expanding the existing telephone exchanges wherever feasible and by opening new exchanges, subject to availability of equipment, cable and other materials.

(c) 23 requests are pending for opening of new telephone exchanges in

Gujarat and the demand of which is likely to be progressively met during 1985-86 subject to availability of resources.

[English]

Take over of Sick Distilleries

*564. SHRI Y. S. MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government to take over such distilleries as are not running profitably due to malpractices of their present management ; and

(b) whether Government are reviewing their licensing policy on the setting up of new distilleries because of shortage of molasses which is the basic raw material ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) No such proposal is under consideration of the Central Government.

(b) No, Sir. As per present policy there is already a ban on creation of additional capacity for potable alcohol. Proposals for manufacture of industrial alcohol are, however, considered on merits taking into account the availability of molasses.

Legislation on "Stri Dhan"

*565. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in one of their recent judgements, the Supreme Court laid down that dowry belongs to bride as it is 'Stri Dhan' recognised in Hindu law ; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to bring forward suitable legisla-

tion to give effect to the said judgment ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) Recently (12.3.1985), the Supreme Court held in *Prathiba Rani vs. Suraj Kumar and another* that presents, articles or other property given to a bride at or about the time of the marriage belong to her absolutely where (as in the instant case) she is a Hindu and would be her 'stri dhan', and that in regard to the stridhan property of a married woman, even if it is placed in the custody of her husband or in-laws, they would be deemed to be trustees and bound to return the same if and when demanded by her. The court also held that where the husband or any relation of his misappropriates such property or refuses to hand it over to her and converts it to his own use, a complaint for an offence under section 405/406, India Penal Code (Criminal breach of trust) would lie.

(b) The aforesaid judgment of the Supreme Court is by way of interpretation of existing law. Under article 141 of the Constitution, the law laid down by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts within the territory of India. Therefore, no legislation is necessary for giving effect to the said judgment.

Functioning of Bhagalpur Telephone Exchange

*566. DR. G. S. RAJHANS : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received complaints regarding malfunctioning of Bhagalpur Telephone Exchange in Bihar ;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard ;

(c) the number of operators working in the Exchange and since when ;

(d) whether there is any monitoring system for checking the working of the Exchange from time to time ?

(e) if so, the details thereof ; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) No, Sir. Only complaints about rude behaviour of telephone operators are occasionally received.

(b) Action is taken against erring officials.

(c) 70 Telephone Operators are working—10 from 1971, 25 from 1975 and 35 from 1978.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The functioning of telephone system is being monitored from time to time by the officers at local and Circle levels.

Circle is monitoring trunk services daily and functioning of local telephone system monthly through Management Information System (MIS) indicators. Telephone system is also inspected periodically by different level officers.

(f) Question does not arise in view of reply at (c) and (d) above.

Misuse of Telephones

3996. DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that many officers and staff of the Department are having more than one telephone both at home and offices ;

(b) if so, the number of such staff in the country and the total annual expenditure incurred thereon ;