

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, May 6, 1986/Vaisakha 16, 1908
(SAKA)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : Have you woken up, Sir ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ) : Who has slept, Sir ?

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, he is asking whether the previous night was 'Shivaratri' or 'Shahbanoratri'.

MR. SPEAKER : Both the names start with S and have the same sign of zodiacs whatever be the name.

SHRI A.K. SEN : He is telling that his wife had asked him where he was during the previous night.

MR. SPEAKER : Why did he not get a certificate from me ? I would have certified his presence here.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Public Call Offices at Wynad, Idukki and Allappadi in Kerala

*928. DR. K.G. ADIYODI : Will the Minister OF COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

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(a) the number of public call offices functioning in Kerala circle as at the end of 1985-86 and the proposal to open public call offices during the current year; and

(b) the steps taken to provide public call offices in the tribal areas of Wynad, Idukki and Allappadi to overcome the shortfall ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) :

(a) There are a total of 2813 Public Call Offices in Kerala out of which Forty-six are Long Distance Public Telephones, as at the end of 1985-86. There is no proposal to open Long Distance Public Telephones during the year 1986-87. Local Public Call Offices are opened where justified and feasible.

(b) Out of a total of 546 hexagons in Kerala Circle, only 8 are yet to be provided with telecom facility. Out of these eight, one is the Wynad District, 5 in Idukki District and Nil in Attapady (Not Allappady as indicated in the question). These are proposed to be covered with telecom facility during the Seventh Plan.

DR. K.G. ADIYODI : Wynad is predominantly a tribal area. If there is a forest fire, they will be able to inform the concerned authority as early as possible. Out of these hexagons, even one hexagon telecom is not in the tribal area. Will the government consider opening public call offices in the tribal areas ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : It is true that these districts, as mentioned by the hon. member, are tribal districts and therefore somewhat backward districts. We would certainly like to put telecom facilities there, but in this year's plan

we will not be able to do much. We will, however, consider this when our next year's plan is drawn up.

DR. K.G. ADIYODI : It is mentioned in the reply that 8 are yet to be provided. Would you consider diverting these hexagons to these tribal areas ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : As I said, Kerala is one of those fortunate States where the telecom services are very well spread out; and this would be obvious from the figures that I have given. Out of 546 hexagons, as much as 98.5 have been covered, compared to some other States. For example, in Rajasthan it is 22.6 per cent and in Bihar 24.3 per cent. We do not grudge it. They deserve it. It is a progressive State and it is making use of telecommunications. All I can assure the member is that next year, we will certainly try to accommodate their wishes.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : Now Tulsiramji would put his supplementary.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Thank you, Sir. From the figures given by the hon. Minister it appears that they have installed adequate number of telephones in Kerala. Only the hon. Members from Kerala would be knowing as to how many they require and by how much they fall short of the requirement. From the figures it seems to be all right. But I am a bit selfish here. I belong to Andhra Pradesh and, therefore, with the permission of the Chair, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether such telephones have been installed in the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh and if not, is there any scheme to do so in the are future ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, apart from Kerala, Andhra Pradesh is also one of the fortunate States which has a good telecom facility. It is far above the national average. Out of 4991 hexagons, 90.4 per cent have been covered. However, efforts will be made to cover the rest as desired by the hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER : What a fine performance indeed,

[*English*]

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : The number of STD calls, i. e. the international trunk calls going from Kerala abroad is on the highest side, because a number of people are working outside. They are feeling the difficulty of not having a connection directly anywhere in Kerala and especially in Thiruvalla, headquarters of my constituency. This is the place where we get foreign exchange earnings from outside. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether an international STD facility will be provided in the near future in Thiruvalla, considering the availability of foreign exchange and also considering the number of people employed outside.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, we are expanding our international subscriber dialling service in a very big way. Till a few months back, only 4 metro cities were covered by international subscriber trunk dialling. Now in the last few months, we have added about 50 such stations in the whole country. As regards Kerala, the figures are not here because the question does not cover that. But we will certainly try to see that more and more places in Kerala are covered, because they definitely need it.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : You may speak Ushaji, what have you to say about Gujarat ?

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, recently the Hon. Prime Minister had visited my constituency Kutch as also the tribal areas. On that occasion, an Adivasi Sarpanch had told the Prime Minister that because of his visit a telephone had been installed temporarily and requested him to it get installed there on permanent basis. The tribal area is very backward and it is a border area. Will the hon. Minister do something to provide them telephones?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : If the hon. lady Member could give me the information as to the place where she wants the telephone it will be my earnest endeavour to fulfill their demand.

MR. SPEAKER : My area Sikar is also very backward ; when are you going to link it with telephone ? *(Interruptions)*

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Do not have more phones at your place. Otherwise people will be raising points of order on telephone.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : I shall get the telephones installed at such a distant place where I am required to go occasionally.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MOHD. AYUB KHAN : Affections and confidence stem from the heart.

MR. SPEAKER : What a wonderful statement.

SHRI MOHD. AYUB KHAN : Will the hon. Minister assure us that Jhunjhunu and Sikar areas of Rajasthan will be linked by S.T.D. and if so, by when ?

MR. SPEAKER : You assure us fully.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Jhunjhunu is the neighbouring district of Sikar. We shall certainly do something about that.

MR. SPEAKER : Thank you.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : Gross injustice is being done to us.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Recently, I had been to Bhilwara to inaugurate a new Exchange.

MR. SPEAKER : He might have been absent, but not me.

(Interruptions)

[English]

Meetings of Telephone Advisory Committee of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

*929. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of meetings of the Telephone Advisory Committee of Andaman and Nicobar Islands held during the last three years ;

(b) if no such meetings were held, the reasons thereof ; and

(c) whether Government propose to make it mandatory to hold at least one such meeting in a year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) One meeting in 1983 was held of the Telecom Advisory Committee whose term expired on 31.10.1984.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

(c) The meetings of the Committees are to be held once in 3 months as far as possible.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : The hon. Minister is very kindhearted and he always looks after the interest of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. But I am sorry to say that from the reply given by the Ministry, one can judge how the Telephone Department is functioning. The tenure of the Committee had expired on 31.10.1984. Thereafter, what was the reason for which it was not re-constituted immediately ? In the last meeting which was held in the year 1983 what were the salient recommendations given and sent to the Government ? What action has Government taken on these ? Because two years have passed.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I have with me all the dates as to when the term of the Committee expired, when fresh nominations were invited, when we addressed the Lok Sabha Sectt. for communication of names and so on and so forth. It is true that a lot of time has been taken in this. Now the new committee has been formed. 16th of May has been fixed for its first meeting. I can assure the hon. Member through you that whatever recommendations are made by the Telephone Advisory Com-