

SHRI T. BASHEER: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the Centre for Development of Telematics (C- DOT) which was set up in 1984 has developed indigenous technology for Indian Telecommunication System and if so, what are the new projects taken up by C-DOT and the recently constituted Telecom Commission to boost up indigenous effort and self-reliance in our Telecommunication industry.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: Sir, the C-DOT has been set up to develop indigenous automatic switching systems. It has developed an entirely indigenous system consisting of, first of all, what were call the RAX — Rural Automatic Exchanges, and then this EPABX that is, Electronic Private Automatic Switching System. Then the 512 port system and also a large 16,000 lines system. RAX has already been developed and it is being installed in various villages and also being licensed to parties - public and private. EPABX has also been developed and is being implemented. 512 port system has also been developed and it is under trial now in Delhi Cantonment. Large 16,000 line system has also been developed and it is going to be under field trials some time this month.

SHRI T. BASHEER: My second supplementary is about ITI unit at Palghat. I understand, there is a project for development of ITI unit at Palghat. The Public Investment Board has already cleared this Rs. 69 crores project. I would like to know whether it is a fact that the project is pending with the Government for clearance, and if so, what steps are being taken to given clearance to this project.

SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN: There is an expansion project at Palghat for Digital Trunk Automatic Exchange. The estimates for this proposal have been revised and it awaits being sent for approval to the Cabinet.

Cases of Untouchability

*887. **SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI:** Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of untouchability in certain parts of the country have come to the notice of the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to check such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI): (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

Complaints are received from individuals regarding the practice of untouchability. The nature of such complaints varies from case to case. They include allegations regarding restrictions on entry to temples, denial of access to drinking water sources, tea-stalls, public cremation/burial grounds and refusal of barber and washerman services, etc.

These complaints are taken up with the concerned State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for necessary remedial action.

In order to check such incidents, the State Governments have been directed to effectively implement the various provisions of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. The measures include:

- appointment of officers for initiating or exercising supervision over prosecutions for contravention of the provisions of the Act;
- setting up of Special Courts for speedy trial of untouchability offences;
- setting up of Committees by the State Governments at appropriate levels to periodically review implementation of the Act;
- provision of legal aid to untouchability victims;

- intensive mobilisation of mass media through exhibition of films, documentaries, seminars.

Further, Central Assistance is being provided to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations towards steps undertaken by them for implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: The hon. Minister, in the reply, while answering to my Part 'C' question, stated:

"In order to check such incidents, the State Governments have been directed to effectively implement the various provisions of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. The measures include:"

One of the measures is:

"setting up of Special Courts for speedy trial of untouchability offences;"

I want to know from the hon. Minister how many Special Courts have been constituted throughout the country and more so in Orissa, and how many cases have been registered and how many cases have ended with conviction and the term of sentence awarded to the convict.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: In all the States, Special Courts are there. The details are: Andhra Pradesh - 11; Bihar 4; Karnataka 3; Rajasthan 8; Madhya Pradesh 9; Tamil Nadu 4. Total comes to 38. In 1985, under PCR, registered cases were 3329, cases challenged in the court were 2391 and only 265 persons were convicted. In 1986, registered cases were 3709 and 2329 cases were challenged and 457 persons were convicted. Government has been spending for PCRs in every plan. This year, we are giving Rs. 1 crores. We are helping the State Governments so that this Act can be implemented vigorously.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: Part

(a) of my question was:

"whether cases of untouchability in certain parts of the country have come to the notice of the Union Government;"

The answer is :

"Complaints are received from individuals regarding the practice of untouchability...."

I do not know whether any organisation has sent any complaint or not. But there is a lot of discussion going on in Parliament itself regarding untouchability.

You know that no less a person than the Sankaracharya of Puri has remarked very badly on the entry into temples by Harijans. You also know the subsequent reaction for it throughout the country. I do not know whether later in the Press he has denied that. But when it is coming in the Press, there is a bad impact created in the minds of Harijans throughout the country.

I would like to know whether he has remarked in that way, how it is published in the Press, whether publication of such type of articles can be banned if it is not a fact because it is creating a bad impact in the minds of the whole of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people.

There is a Press report yesterday that in Orissa some people are going to form a party to fight elections on caste basis, that is Khandayat Kshatriya Party. It was not previously going on in Orissa. But all of a sudden I saw in the papers that there are going to form a new party in Orissa and fight elections on caste basis. I would like to know whether the Government will take action to ban this type of a party to fight elections because this will also create a bad impact on the country as a whole.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: As far as the utterances of Shri Sankaracharya are concerned, as the House knows, when

he uttered certain things, the House had taken serious note of them we all had condemned them the Government had taken serious note of them and all the organisations also had condemned them. It came in the Press that he had subsequently resiled from his utterances. After that I have not come across any such Press statement of Shri Sankaracharya. Once it had come. Two cases are pending against him and investigation is going on. Now he says that he has not said it in that way. But whatever he had said, we don't agree with him and the nation does not agree with him. Our PCR Act 1955 is quite clear, our Constitution is quite clear on any individual. I had said it earlier and I repeat it here that this country is not guided by Shri Sankaracharya or any other Guru; we are guided by our own Constitution and our Constitution is supreme. India is a secular country. And, in this country no caste can be allowed to form itself as indicated and fight the elections. That will be taken care of by the Election Law.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: I would like to know whether the new party formed in Orissa on caste basis will be allowed to fight elections.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: That will come under the People's Representation Act and that will be taken care of by the Election Law.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: How will Election Law come here because Shri Sankaracharya will never fight an election.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: There are two separate issues here. He is saying about some party that is formed in Orissa. That has come in the newspapers and I have also read it. The Election Commission and other laws of the country will take care of that.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Despite the best efforts of the Government, instances of untouchability are found in some places. Now we are trying to strengthen the Panchayat system through the country. As I see,

in most of the legislations in the State or in the Village Panchayats where qualification or disqualification of a member is laid down, there is no provision that if a person is convicted of an offence under the Untouchability Act he is disqualified. Such a provision is not there in most of the legislation, governing Panchayats. Therefore I would like to know whether the Government is proposing to suggest to the State Governments and local self bodies to include such a provision in their respective legislation for the purpose of curbing untouchability?

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: The hon. Member has come with a very good suggestion and we will commend it to the State Governments.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Contrary to what they have said, the discrimination on grounds of Castes is prevailing in our country. One very glaring instance I had raised in the House, some time ago, - and you also had sympathised with that - is the one man battle going on in Boat Club. Shri Khilanand Jha was an employee of the Bihar Government; he is a Brahmin; he married a Scheduled Caste girl and on that ground he had to lose his job. He is here in the Boat Club for more than one year, staging dharna and in between, twice he was manhandled by the police and he was beaten up. This dharna by Khilanand Jha has been going on in the Boat Club. I wrote to the Prime Minister twice. I never wanted to politicise this. I talked to the State Government of West Bengal whether they could give a job. They have assured that they can give the job. I do not want to send him to West Bengal. I would like to know whether the Prime Minister, will now take notice of the sufferings that that man is undergoing and the unique battle that he is fighting and do something to rehabilitate him in the Government and compensate him. I have written twice to the Prime Minister. He lost his job because he married a Scheduled Caste girl. You are talking of secularism, but I am very sorry about what is beginning.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI:

What he is saying is not correct. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: What is not correct? We have written letters to the Prime Minister. What is not correct? This has been happening for more than one year. (*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): This matter was raised by the hon. Member in the House. One your direction we have called for a report, because the story goes that he was sacked for corruption and not because he belonged to ... (*Interruptions*) We shall go into the details of the case. If any injustice is done, definitely justice will be given. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: The Chief Minister of Bihar gave an assurance that he would be taken back in Bihar. That job was not given. (*Interruptions*)

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): Specific details are not available with me now. I will definitely look into the matter. If what the hon. Member says is true, we will definitely take action.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Whenever we write any letter to the Prime Minister, we are not informed about the action taken thereon. At least M. Ps. should be informed about the action taken on the matter raised by them. We receive your acknowledgement card only and nothing else.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Next question, Dr. G. Vijaya Rama Rao.. not present.

[*Translation*]

Shri C. Janga Reddy, don't quarrel. Just

ask your question.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI: Can I just answer a part of the last question? I have just been given a note, subject to confirmation that the Officer was given relief. He was given a job in Bihar, but he doesn't want a job in Bihar; he wants a job at the Centre. We will look into the matter and see what can be done. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: An assurance was given by the then Chief Minister of Bihar. He went back to Bihar. But he was not given a job; instead he was harassed. (*Interruptions*) His wife was burnt. I do not want to raise certain other matters. His wife was burnt when he went to get a job. This is a human question.

MR. SPEAKER: He will see to it.

Propellant Factory at Warangal

*889. SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for the establishment of Propellant Factory at Warangal in Andhra Pradesh is pending with the Union Government;

(b) if so, since when and the reasons for delay in giving clearance; and

(c) the time by which the proposal would be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) and (b). In connection with a proposal for the establishment of a propellant factory in the country, various sites, including Warangal in Andhra Pradesh, have been evaluated by a Site Selection Committee constituted in March 1986. The entire issue for establishment of a new propellant factory is under consideration of Government.