

[English]

SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a well-known fact the world over that now information systems are being communicated on telephone lines, especially data. We get our PTI scan in fact through one of those systems and our Indian Airlines booking is also dependent on the telephone system. It is a fact that our telephones fail often. Is the Ministry proposing to dedicate lines for these, i. e., dedicate special lines and special means of communication either through micro-wave or UHF, whichever is the system? I would like to know whether the Minister is aware that this is the situation that has developed and what the Ministry is planning to meet the future needs of digital data communication?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, in addition to the voice telephones we have a big plan for data communication and facsimile communication and even now we have some dedicated lines for the purpose. But to what extent we can spare the existing voice telephone lines to this system again depends on what traffic is available on that particular line in that particular area, and above all, as I said earlier, on what provision we get from the Planning Commission to put up these schemes.

Foreign Technology in essential fields

*347. **SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI :** Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government intend to import technology in essential fields like telephones, telex, trunks etc., and if so, the policy in regard thereto ; and

(b) the fields in which foreign technology is acceptable and those in which foreign technology will not be permitted ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN) : (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

A broad technology base has been established in the country for manufacture

of essential items. Due to rapid change in technology and increased digitalisation of the National Telecommunication Network, the need to continuously update our technology would continue to arise over periods of time.

A large variety of equipments involving switching, transmission and terminal equipment are used in the telecommunication network. Certain equipments of these types will be manufactured through foreign collaboration.

Government's policy for import of technology is selective. Import of technology is permitted in sophisticated and high priority areas, in export-oriented or import substitution manufacturing, or for enabling indigenous industry to update existing technology in India to meet effectively changing consumer preferences and/or to become competitive in the export market.

An illustrative list of industries where no foreign collaboration, financial or technical, is considered necessary has been issued by the Government and copies of the same have also been sent to Parliament Library.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI : Sir, the Statement clearly states the policy of the Government. In the Statement the Government declared that large variety of equipments involving switching, transmission and diagonal equipment—certain equipments of those types are manufactured through foreign collaboration. It is our sad experience that in our country a number of private sector companies obtain licences and delayed in implementing the whole thing, at the same time preventing others from entering the field, the result of which is that the entire progress of modern tele-communication system and telex and others is deprived to the people.

So, may I know from the Minister what steps he is going to take in such sectors for delaying to implement the thing and is it not a fact that Hindustan Teleprinters who were making telex machines with Olivetti suddenly switched towards Olivetti for making electric typewriter machines more which are not essential and which can be manufactured indigenously in the country. But they are not manufacturing Telex

machines. What is your view on this? What are you going to tell on this?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): Sir, so far as telecommunication is concerned, the Government has made a statement in Parliament on 23rd March relaxing the policy and encouraging participation of private sector in the manufacture of telecommunication equipments. The hon. Member has a feeling that parties come, get a licence but they do not take any effective steps to go into production. That is why, this is open to private parties and private sector. If a particular party after getting the licence, does not take any effective steps to go into production, then other parties can enter in that field. The licence issued under IDR Act as it is, once you give a licence, I am told, it is very difficult to cancel that licence. That is why, we have got a system that before issuing a licence, the party has to approach for a letter of intent. After getting the letter of intent, then for converting the letter of intent into a licence, he has to approach within a particular period of time. After the party has taken effective steps to start industry, then only the licence would be given to him.

So, all necessary safeguards are provided. In spite of that, if there are parties who after taking the licences do not go into production, then it is open for other private parties to come forward and start producing the equipments that are very badly required for the country.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: In the statement, it has been further stated:

“Certain equipments of these types will be manufactured through foreign collaboration”.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that in recent times, a team from the Government of India visited the United States, headed by one Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, to study foreign technology in the selected fields? If so, may I know which are the selected fields for which you are bringing technology from the United States? I am also

happy to know whether such fields include telecommunication system also.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I don't have that information. But I am told that the Ministry of Communication, may be in consultation with the concerned Ministries and the Finance Ministry, have selected some technologies. I think, some three or four parties or four technologies have been selected. If those private parties want to start any activity, they have to take and accept only those technologies which are selected. But since this is a matter which is being dealt in the Ministry of Communication, I don't have that information. If the hon. Member is interested, he can address it to the Communication Ministry.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: Sir, I asked: “Whether his Ministry is aware that a team had gone to United States to import foreign technology in the selected fields, headed by one of the Joint Secretaries of his Ministry”? Which are the fields for which you are bringing technologies from the United States?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: He is asking a specific question about import of foreign technology from America. In what field, I do not know. If he puts a specific question, I would try to collect the information.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: My question is regarding import of foreign technology to India. Part (a) of my question is concerned with telecommunication.

MR. SPEAKER: He said, there are so many fields for which the deal is being done.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: He said, “selected fields”. I wanted to know which are the selected fields for bringing technology from the United States. The question is “selected field”.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: That is why, I made it clear that if he wants to know which is the technology that is being selected for telecommunication industry, I do not have the information. But certain technologies have been selected by the Ministry of Communication.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: He said, technologies were permitted only

in selected fields. A team has gone to the United States. I want to know which are those selected fields to bring foreign technology into India.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : The hon. Member may get that information, if he puts a specific question, a separate question.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO : Sir, I am referring to part (b) of the Question which deals with in which field foreign technology is acceptable and in which field foreign technology is not permitted. In the statement that is laid on the Table of the House, the Minister has stated that the policy of the Government is to import technology in fields where there are rapid changes in growth and technology, and also in certain other fields which are sophisticated and high priority areas where the industries could be export-oriented.

There has been a lot of confusion as far as the import of technology is concerned. While this is what the statement of the Minister says, the technical know-how and foreign collaborations have been allowed for even things like manufacture of Olivetti Typewriters, a technology which is 20 or 30 years old; the Lohias were allowed to import technology for manufacturing motor cycles while Bajaj is making Vespa scooters. These people have got small engines and these are sold at a higher price just because of the trade name, the brand name. Even for essential food items like Noodles, Magie and several other things, you import technology from abroad. Ultimately, what is actually happening is that this is being used as a facade to sell the foreign trade name in India. We are not against import of modern technology. But is this the type of technology that the country needs today even after 35 years of Independence for essential items like food stuffs, typewriters, motor cycles and all that?

The Government in this very House, during the previous Lok Sabha, when Mr. S.M. Krishna was the Minister of State for Industry, had answered questions on this very specific subject. But there was no follow-up action taken by the Government. Even the Kothari Sugar Mill are making

drinks with foreign collaboration. These are some instances which we have read in some of the magazines and newspapers.

I would like the Minister to enunciate the policy of the Government specially as far as the foreign technology import and the collaboration of all these things are concerned.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : I want to make it clear that the Government is not encouraging import of foreign technology indiscriminately. The policy of the Government is that the import of technology should be on selective basis and it should be based on national priority. There is a Board which is called the Foreign Investment Board. Before any technology is imported, the proposal has to go before them. It is properly scrutinised. Only the technology which is sophisticated, the technology which is not available in the country, the technology which is going to improve our exports and import substitutions, the technology which is going to improve the quality of goods that are being manufactured and only in the interest of the country if any such technology has to be imported, only such technology is permitted to be imported.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Whenever we have an international conference and, particularly, when we have the non-aligned conferences, we wax eloquent on the South-South cooperation, including the technological cooperation. As is well-known, amongst the developing countries, there are some countries which are very developed in some areas and these developments have not gone to the entire population. While we speak so eloquently on generalities, when we get down to specifics, why do we always run to USA, as mentioned by my hon. friend Mr. Das Muni or England or France and not to other highly developed countries in some areas, the developing countries? Why is the technological cooperation amongst the developing countries not taking off? What has happened to the idea of giving preferential treatment to the import of technology from a developing country? What has happened to all this?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : I have made the policy of the Government clear,

so far as the import of technology is concerned, that it is selective. So, while importing technology, I want to make it clear that we want to import technology which is considered to be the best in the world. There is no question of supporting or giving preference to anybody. If we want to import technology, it should be in the interest of the country. Therefore, we want to import the best technology that is available.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : May I know whether it is a fact that an Indian company has been allowed to enter into collaboration with a U. S. firm for the manufacture of Pepsi Cola, a soft drink ? Do the Government of India consider it to be an essential field for importing technology ?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : The hon. Member has put a very specific question. I require notice.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : What is specific about it ? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : He cannot say off-hand. If he says something wrong, then you will catch him.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : You kindly advise the Minister to reply to my question.

MR. SPEAKER : You can put a specific question, give notice and he will reply. There is no problem.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Drink to his health and ask the question.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I want to know whether the Government considers a soft drink to be a high priority area. If he cannot answer me on Pepsi Cola, let him answer on soft drink area.

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat. Next Question.

Compensation to Victims of Bhopal Gas Tragedy

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*349. **SHRI SURESH KURUP :**

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO :

Will the Minister of **CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS** be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of interim compensation paid to the **Bhopal Gas** victims ;

(b) the criteria for this payment ; and

(c) the number of persons given this compensation ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) to (c) : The State Government reported that they have incurred an expenditure of over Rs. 10 crores in providing relief to the affected persons both in cash and kind. This includes amounts disbursed in cash, in the form of ex-gratia relief, to the injured persons or the kin of the dead persons.

Incidentally the Government of India have given ways and means support to the extent of Rs. 5 crores to the State Government.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Parts (b) and (c) of my question have not been answered. You should direct the hon. Minister to answer those parts of my question.

My first supplementary is that there are many people around in Bhopal in the gas affected area who have not approached any Government Officers or any Government machinery. I do not know if any such machinery is set up and they have approached people living in low-lying areas and slums.

Will the Government set up a Committee to make a survey of the affected areas, make a first-hand survey of the slum areas, of the whole affected area, take first-hand information and prepare a list of those dead and affected—there are ever so many people affected who have not approached anybody—and make a list of them and help them in getting compensation and other things.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : The hon. Member is under the impression that whatever the State Government is providing is considered as compensation. It is not compensation. It is only a relief. For compensation you know, we have already taken action and the cases are being filed.

So far as relief is concerned, relief has been provided and it is still being continued.