

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : He has not answered my question.

MR. SPEAKER : What is there to answer your question ?

[*Translation*]

Your question has already been replied to. When you put such questions, I cannot help.

[*English*]

Telecommunication services in N.E. Region

*205. **SHRI AJOY BISWAS :** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the telecommunication services in the North Eastern Region are not satisfactory ;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to improve the situation, and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the progress made so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is given below.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Statements are placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(b) (i) Most of the circuits are working on overhead lines which get interrupted due to frequent thefts of wires and natural calamities viz. heavy rains, floods etc;

(ii) Many big cities are still served by manual exchanges which are not able to handle the traffic satisfactorily;

(iii) Of late there have been damages to the Microwave station of Sikaritora

on Silchar—Agartala route and Dolia on Silchar—Shillong route by miscreants.

Silchar-Agartala Microwave route has been repaired and put through on 31-7-1985 after 54 days. The Silchar—Shillong route is still interrupted.

(d) The following steps are being taken to improve the performance of telecommunications services in North Eastern Region :

(1) The overhead open wire lines are being replaced by reliable UHF and Microwave radio relay systems and Satellite communications

UHF Systems

- (i) Gauhati—Joggi Road
- (ii) Jorhat—Nazira
- (iii) Silchar—Karimganj
- (iv) Tezpur—Bomdila

Microwave Systems

- (i) Jorhat—Dibrugarh—
Tinsukia
- (ii) Gauhati—Solpara—
Bongaigaon

Satellite earth stations

Gauhati, Hailong, Diphu, Nongstoin, (Williamnagar, Tura, Ukhrul, Karong (Senapati), Chura Chanderpur, Tamong Long, Chandel, Bomdilla, Passighat, Tezu, Alang, Khonsa, Lungleh, Saiha, Mon, Wokha, Zuneb-oto Mokomchung, Tuensang, Kailashahar, R.K. Pur, Dharamnagar.

(2) Large manual exchanges are being replaced by automatic exchanges.

- (i) 2000 lines electronic exchange at Jorhat
- (ii) 2000 lines electronic exchange at Tinsukia
- (iii) 600 lines automatic (MAX II type) at Bongaigaon

(3) Subscribers trunk dialling is being introduced

- (i) Tura—Shillong
- (ii) Dhubri—Shillong
- (iii) Jowai—Shillong
- (iv) Bongaigaon—Shillong
- (v) Naharlagaon—Shillong
- (vi) Borjhar—Shillong
- (vii) Sibsagar—Shillong
- (viii) Imphal—Shillong
- (ix) Tinsukia—Shillong
- (x) Jorhat—Shillong
- (xi) Agartala—Calcutta (SPC)

(4) Expansion programme of the existing exchanges

- (i) Shillong Trunk Automatic Exchange (TAX) is being expanded from 800 lines to 1500 lines
- (ii) Agartala Automatic Exchange is being expanded from 2400 lines to 3000 lines.
- (iii) Shillong Automatic exchange is being expanded from 4000 lines to 5000 lines.
- (iv) Gauhati Automatic exchange is being expanded from 7800 lines to 8400 lines.
- (v) A new Telex exchange of 20 lines is planned at Kohima.

(5) Maintenance and construction practices are being improved :

- (a) Maintenance routines are being vigorously enforced;
- (b) Heavy overhead allignments are being replaced by underground cables;
- (c) Aluminium house wirings are being replaced by copper wires progressively;

(d) Drop wires are being used in place of open wire for providing telephone connections.

(6) To avoid damages to installations, police protection is being arranged.

(7) The following development programmes for Telecommunications system in North Eastern Region have been completed. *Progress already made (replacement of existing exchanges)*

- (i) A new automatic exchange of 2400 lines has been commissioned at Agartala.
- (ii) A new electronic exchange of 2000 lines has been commissioned at Dibrugarh.
- (iii) A new electronic exchange of 2000 lines has been commissioned at Imphal.

UHF Systems

- (i) Silchar—Haflong
- (ii) Dhulia—Cooch Bihar

SHRI AJOY BISWAS : I would like to point out to the hon. Minister that the telephone system in Tripura has totally collapsed. Agartala is a State Capital, but the telephone system there is in doldrums. The telephone of the officials, newspapers and other VIPs are not functioning. The link between the State Capital and the sub-divisional town has been disrupted. The link between Agartala and the rest of the country is also disrupted. This is the position. I am giving an instance. The telephone of the Chairman, Agartala Municipality, is a very important telephone. That was out of order for the last three months. The Chairman of the Agartala Municipality wrote to the concerned authorities, but they did not pay any heed to that letter. Then I wrote to them. Only a few days back, the telephone was rectified. This is the state of affairs. My request is this. Will the hon. Minister send a high-powered team to Tripura to study the situation, and after getting his report,

will the hon. Minister take effective steps ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : If the hon. Member had asked me specifically about Tripura and Agartala, I would have given him a reply in greater detail. But even in the answer that I have given, there are two items which would be of interest to the hon. Member. Large manual exchanges are being replaced by automatic exchanges. Then Subscriber Trunk Dialling is being introduced between Agartala and Calcutta. This is one of the important things which we want to implement. Then under heading 'Expansion programme of the existing exchanges', it has been stated that the Agartala Automatic Exchange is being expanded from 240 lines to 3,000 lines. What I mean to say is that we are making all efforts to improve the tele-communication system in the north-eastern region.

As regards sending a Special Team, it is not necessary because we know the problems there and we are making all efforts to rectify the faults. A Special Task Force has been created for the north-eastern region—which has not been done for any other part and its head quarters are in Gauhati. The General Manager of the Task Force and his staff have been specially assigned the task of pushing through the various schemes in the north-eastern region.

The hon. Member has brought to the notice of the House through you, Sir, the special problems of Agartala. I can assure him that we will look into them in detail and try to see how we can improve the position there.

SHRI AJOY BISWAS : The hon. Minister says that a Task Force is already there. What is the report of the Task Force ? My second supplementary is this. This State Capital should have links with New Delhi by STD. I must say that no such system is there in Agartala or in other parts of the North Eastern Region. In his recent reply Minister said that will be done at the end of the 7th Plan. Sir, what is this, at least the State Capital should be

linked with New Delhi by STD immediately. He can take up other things later on.

MR. SPEAKER : He said that it is going to be linked.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : We are giving top priority for connecting the important towns including the capitals of the North Eastern Region with Delhi and other places on the national STD. That is one of our important endeavours under the 7th Plan ? In do not want to enter into debate as to how big is the 7th Plan, how much money we will get, that is all a different point.

SHRI AJOY BISWAS : What you are going to do ? N. E. Region is a sensitive area.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : We cannot say anything.

MR. SPEAKER : Even if you are in a hurry, it takes time. They say that they are trying to do it. They will do it.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I cannot give a specific time frame. Every thing depends on the plan allocation that we get.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR : Kutch Bujh is a major city in Gujarat. Telecommunication system there is manually operated. An automatic exchange has now been sanctioned for that place, but tenders for the building have not been invited as yet. As a result, the equipment lying there is getting rusted. Therefore, I want to ask what he is doing in this regard ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Exchange will be set up where the equipment has reached. I will start functioning also.

[*English*]

Short supply of Bombay high gas to Industrial consumers in Maharashtra

*206. **SHRI D. B. PATIL :** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state :