

charter hired rigs since no charter hire rigs are operating in these areas.

(c) and (d). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Smuggling of Cellular Phones.

959. SHRI A. INDRAKARAN REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there is large scale smuggling of cellular phones in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Micro Earth Stations in Kerala

960. PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to include Trichur under Micro Earth Stations (VSAT);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such stations are already functioning in Kerala; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise in view of reply to Part (a)

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Micro Earth Stations are already working at following sites installed by respective users as part of Remote Area Business Message Network :

Calicut, Trivandrum, Cochin, Ernakulam (2)

Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana

961. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

SHRI DATTATRAYA BANDARU :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to launch 'Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana' during the current year

with a view of streamlining the communications system in villages; and

(b) if so, the main features of said scheme and the time by which it is proposed to be launched?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana has been introduced in the five States of the country on pilot-project basis since 1st October, 1995.

(b) The main features of the Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana are given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana

Objective of the Scheme

The objective of the scheme is to provide basic postal and telecommunications facilities to the Gram Panchayat villages which are still without post offices. In this scheme, the panchayats will be the nodal point for retailing some of the basic services like sale of stamps and postal stationery, collection and delivery of letters, booking of registered articles, etc.

Functions :

The functions given below shall be performed by the Panchayat Kendra unless otherwise specified by the Department.

(a) Booking of registered letters except VP and Insured articles;

(b) Sale of postage stamps and postal stationery;

(c) Grant of certificate of posting ;

(d) Operation of Mahila Samridhi Yojna Scheme, where feasible;

(e) Collection and delivery of mail including clearance of letter boxes, where feasible;

(f) Propagation of Small Savings Scheme and Rural Postal Life Insurance; and

(g) Other functions of branch post office as and when the Department is satisfied that Kendras are able to discharge them.

In addition the following optional functions may be given to the Sanchar Kendra In-charge by Supdt./Sr.Supdt. Post Offices of concerned division.

Conveyance of mail from Account Office or nearest post office to Sanchar Kendra and vice-versa may also be entrusted to the Kendra Incharge.

The Sanchar kendra Agent under the scheme shall also