

(b) and (c). Government has placed emphasis on strengthening the Public Health System improving sanitation, supply of potable water and provision of health education. The States have been advised to improve disease surveillance and take steps to establish an early warning system for disease control.

[Translation]

Plane hijackers in Pakistan

1732. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH:
SHRI SHARVAN KUMAR PATEL:
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appeared in "Navbharat Times" dated August 30, 1994 regarding Pak's non-handing over of plane hijackers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken up the matter with Pakistan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of Pakistan thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Government have seen media reports to the effect that Pakistan would not be handing over to India the hijackers of the IAC aircrafts under detention in Pakistan.

(c) and (d). Government have taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan. Pakistan has not yet responded.

[English]

Private investors in road sector

1733. SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated back-log of work on National Highways;

(b) the estimated amount of investment required to clear this back-log;

(c) whether there is any proposal to open up the road sector to private investors to clear the back-log; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). Presumably, the Hon'ble Member is referring to the overall deficiencies in the existing National Highway System. The cost of removal of these deficiencies has been broadly assessed at Rs. 52,000 crore.

(c) and (d). The Government has been contemplating Private Sector Participation in Highway sector on BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) basis for which broad modalities are yet to be finalised. It is, therefore, early to spell out the details at this stage.

Telegraph Act, 1885

1734. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH:
SHRI ANKUSHRAO RAOSAHEB TOPE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Government propose to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the amendment is likely to be made?

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

(b) and (c). A Bill titled "Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Bill, 1993 was introduced in Lok Sabha on 10.8.1993 and is pending in that House. The Bill aims at defining "unauthorised" diversion of telephone lines and also provides for penalty for unauthorised diversion. The standing Committee on Communications considered the Bill and gave its report. It is proposed to take up the Bill for consideration in the coming Sessions of Parliament. However, it is difficult to specify any time limit by which the amendment to the Act is likely to be effected.

[Translation]

Telephone to Freedom Fighters in Maharashtra

1735. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of freedom fighters on the waiting list for telephone connections in Maharashtra, district-wise;

(b) whether any time limit has been fixed to provide them telephone connections;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (a) to (d): Sir, information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Indo-US agreement

1736. SHRI KESRI LAL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Steel Authority of India Limited has entered into an agreement with the United States of America for collaboration in the field of information technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the benefits likely to accrue thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has entered into an agreement with USX Engineers & Consultants Inc. (UEC), a subsidiary of USX Corporation of USA to form a Joint Venture Company (JVC) in the field of Information Technology.

(b) The Promoters Agreement between SAIL and UEC was signed on 10th November, 1994. In the proposed JVC the equity participation of UEC and SAIL shall be in the ratio of 60:40. The proposed JVC shall have an initial authorised capital of Rs. One Crore (Rs. 1,00,00,000) and