

[English]

**P&T Facilities in inaccessible Areas**

2669. SHRI BAPU HARI CHAURE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have made any efforts to provide postal and telegraph facilities in the inaccessible areas of the country; and

(b) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CUMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKHRAM: (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The norms of opening post offices in inaccessible areas including hilly, tribal and desert areas have been liberalised vis-a-vis those for normal areas. During the Eighth Five Year Plan period, it is proposed to open 1500 extra departmental branch post offices in such areas, out of a total target of 3600. Of these 274 extra departmental branch post offices have already been opened in 1992-93 and 92 extra departmental branch post offices in 1993-94 upto 25.10.93.

*Telegraph offices:* The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

[Translation]

**Haj Committee Rules**

2670. SHRI MUMTAZ ANSARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to simplify Haj committee rules further in view of the inconveniences caused to the Haj Pilgrims;

(b) If so, the details thereof; and

(c) If not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Haj Committee Rules 1963 have been framed by the Government of India in exercise of powers conferred by Haj Committee Act of 1959. They deal primarily with organisational and financial matters relating to the Haj Committee rather than with arrangements for pilgrims going for Haj. The latter is regulated under guidelines issued annually by Haj. Government makes every effort to improve facilities for pilgrims on an on-going basis.

**Construction of Express Road**

2671. SHRI DILEEP BHAI SANGHANI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the construction of express road from Ahmedabad (Gujarat) to Bombay via Baroda has not been completed within the stipulated time period;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which this work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGADISH TYTLER): (a) to (c). Construction of Ahmedabad-Vadodara section only which has been taken up is behind schedule owing to slow performance of the contracting agencies. The work is likely to be completed by December, 1995.