

Decentralisation of Office of Director, Telecommunication (North) Muzaffarpur

3730. SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in spite of decentralisation, the Office of Director, Telecommunication, (North) Muzaffarpur is still functioning with skeleton staff from Patna although more than two years have passed; and

(b) if so, what is the reason for delay in shifting the office to Muzaffarpur and when it is likely to be shifted?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL): (a) No post of Director, Telecommunication (North) has been sanctioned for Muzaffarpur under the decentralisation scheme in 1979.

(b) Question does not arise.

Illegal Coal Mines

3731. SHRI AJIT BAG: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state the total number of illegal coal mines working in our country giving State-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Acts were amended in 1976 prohibiting any person, other than the persons authorised by the Acts to carry on coal mining operations in India in any form and terminating all leases relating to winning or mining of coal granted in favour of private parties except those engaged in the production of iron and steel. After this amendment there can be no private coal mining in the country illegally. Certain persons filed Writ Petitions in the High Courts and Supreme Court challenging the provisions of the Act and obtained interim orders restricting the authorities and the coal companies from interfering

with their operations. The Supreme Court in their judgements in April and May, 1980 upheld the vires of the Act and dismissed all the Writ Petitions. After these judgements the menace of illegal coal mining has been curbed to a great extent.

The coal belt in the country is vast and certain persons, at times violate the provisions of Law and indulge in illegal extraction of coal in certain areas surreptitiously and these are stray cases. The Coal Companies and the State Governments have been instructed to take both punitive and preventive actions to book the offenders as and when detected. Periodic raids are also conducted by the State Governments law enforcing agencies in collaboration with the security staff of the Coal Companies.

Linking of Darjeeling Karshiang and Kallimong with Delhi through S.T.D.

3732. SHRI ANANDA PATHAK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) is there any proposal to connect Darjeeling, Karshiang, Kalimpong with Delhi and other cities of India through STD;

(b) if so, when and the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Darjeeling, Karshiang and Kalimpong are likely to be connected with Delhi and other cities of India towards the end of current Plan Period through Siliguri Trunk Automatic Exchange which is under installation.

(c) Does not arise.