

investment in SAARC Countries under the Fast Track from US \$ 4 million in 1997 to US \$ 15 million in 1998. This is expected to encourage Indian investment and joint ventures in SAARC Countries.

8. For the year 1998-99, India has offered to host the following activities under the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA). Expenditure involved depends upon each specific programme.

Activity

1. Workshop on Consensus Development on Germ-plasm and IPA.
2. Seventh Archaeological Congress.
3. Three-days Seminar of SAARC Countries on Post Literacy & Continuing Education for Neo-literates.
4. Workshop on early Childhood Development and Prevention of Disabilities among Children.
5. Workshop on Improvement of care of New Born/ infants especially on breast-feeding and feeding practices.
6. Workshop on Income and Employment Generation in the Rural Areas on a Sustained Basis.
7. Expert Group meeting on Manufacturing, Quality Control and Manpower Training on Cement and Allied Building Materials Industries.
8. Entrepreneurship Training Programme on Manufacturing Common Clay based Products having relevance to Rural Housing, Sanitation, Drinking Water, Irrigation and Tableware.
9. Second SAARC Food Festival.
10. Workshop on "Follow-up Action on Fourth World Conference on Women".

Out of order Telephone Instrument

473. SHRI D.B. ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the telephone subscribers of Uttar Pradesh and various other parts of the country are facing problems due to their telephone instruments being out of order;
- (b) if so, whether the Government propose to issue instructions to the telephone exchanges of Uttar Pradesh, particularly Sultanpur district for replacing telephone instruments out of order since long;
- (c) if so, the time by which it is likely to be done; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) and (b) No major problems are being faced by telephone subscribers due to telephone instrument remaining out of order in Uttar Pradesh and various other parts of the country. Faulty

instruments are being replaced by working instruments in all parts of the country including Sultanpur.

- (c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Extra Departmental Employees

474. SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE: Will , PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of E.D. employees in Post Offices in Maharashtra;
- (b) whether the recruitment of such employees is made through employment exchange;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and other methods adopted for recruiting them;
- (d) the facilities being provided by Postal Department to these employees in comparison to regular employees; and
- (e) the services of ED employees regularised in the State during the last three years till date, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) As on 1.4.98, the total number of ED Agents in Maharashtra Circle was 24246.

(b) and (c) As per the departmental instructions which existed prior to 19.8.98 except where otherwise provided specifically, all vacancies of ED Agents were required to be notified to the Employment Exchange and selection made from amongst the nominees. In the event of Employment Exchange failing to sponsor the required minimum number of suitable candidates within the stipulated date, the recruiting authorities had the option to issue open advertisement and make selection from amongst candidates responding there to. As per the latest instructions issued on 19.8.98 which have come into force from the date of issue, all vacancies of ED Agents excluding those where the process of recruitment through Employment Exchange/open advertisement had already commenced, in addition to notifying through the Employment Exchange, the local authorities are required to simultaneously notify the vacancies through public advertisement, and candidates nominated by the Employment Exchange as also those responding to the open advertisement will be considered. In case the notification and public advertisement so issued fail to elicit any response within the stipulated date or if the effective number of candidates responding is less than 3, the vacancy will be re-notified to the Employment Exchange and advertised, calling for nominations, etc. within 15 days. Dependent of ED Agents who die in harness are also considered for appointment against vacancies of ED Agents in relaxation of normal rules of recruitment.

(d) Important facilities in this respect available at present to ED Agents in the Department of Posts are given in the attached statement.

(e) The information is being collected from Maharashtra Circle.

Statement*Important facilities provided to Extra Departmental Agents in comparison to Regular Employees*

Regular Government Employees	Extra Departmental Agents
1. Fixed 8 hours duty per day.	Maximum 5 hours duty per day.
2. Graded scales of pay.	Fixed allowance on the basis of workload.
3. Retirement at 60 years of age.	Can remain in service up to 65 years of age.
4. Pensionable service.	Non-pensionable service.
5. Not permitted to hold any alternative job.	Alternative source of income is compulsory.
6. Liability for transfers.	Non-transferable.
7. To be a resident of India.	Local village residency is compulsory.
8. Post Office in a Govt. building—owned or rented.	Post Office premises to be located in the BPM's residence, shop, etc.
9. Governed CCS (Conduct) Rules framed under Art. 309 of Constitution.	Governed by Non-statutory P&T ED Agents (Conduct & Service) Rules 1964.
10. Leave of various kind is permissible.	No leave of any kind is allowed, except on condition of substitute arranged by EDA, for a maximum of 180 days.
11. Group Insurance scheme for Central Govt. employees provides graded benefits for different groups of employees. Group 'D' employees are provided risk coverage for Rs. 15,000/- on payment of Rs. 15/- per month as contribution.	EDAS are covered by a Group Insurance Scheme w.e.f. 1.4.92 providing risk coverage for Rs. 10,000/- on payment of Rs. 10/- per month.
12. Gratuity is permissible at the prescribed rates related to length of qualifying service with a prescribed ceiling.	Ex-gratia gratuity upto Rs. 6000/- for EDAS having minimum continuous service of 10 years.

Extra Departmental Agents are given preference for employment in Group 'D' and Postman cadres in filling up vacancies earmarked for outsiders.

Theft of Cables

475. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- the number of cases of theft of cables reported in the Capital during 1997-98;
- the number of cases in which arrests have been made during this period;
- the quantum of loss suffered as a result thereof;
- whether the Government have conducted any inquiry;
- if so, the outcome thereof; and
- the measures taken by the Government to check such thefts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Total cable theft reported during 97-98 are 238.

- Nil.

(c) The material loss due to cable theft during 1997-98 was Rs. 30,03,872/- only which does not include the Loss of revenue due to service interruption.

(d) FIR has been lodged in every individual case in respective police stations. It is further pursued by holding meetings with Senior Police Officers.

(e) Cases are still under investigation by police authorities.

(f) Patrolling on the vulnerable (theft prone) cable routes have been intensified in co-ordination with the local police authorities, Co-ordination meetings are being held with police authorities to curb frequent occurrence of cable thefts.

[Translation]

Supply of Instruments

476. SHRI RAJO SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request has been received to supply certain instruments to Bihar Telecom Circle for the speedy