

[Translation]

Support Price of Sugarcane

498. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware that crushing season 1998-99 has commenced but State Governments except Punjab have not declared the support price of sugarcane; and
- (b) if so, the steps being taken by the Union Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Neither the Government of India nor the State Governments declare the support price of sugarcane. Government of India fixes the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane under the provisions of the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966. It is that Statutory Minimum Price below which no producer of sugar can pay to the sugarcane growers. State Governments declare the State Advised Price (SAP), which are generally higher as compared to SMP. Government of India is not involved when the State Governments declare the SAP. For the sugar season 1998-99 (Oct.-Sept.), the Government of India has already fixed the SMP of sugarcane at Rs. 52.70 per quintal linked to a basic recovery of 8.5% subject to a premium of Rs. 0.62 for every 0.1% point increase in the recovery above that level.

Losses Suffered by DoT

499. SHRI SURENDRA PRASAD YADAV (JAHANABAD):

SHRI SURESH WARPUDKAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Department of Telecommunications has suffered heavy losses due to the negligence of the Officers and especially due to the fact the different rules have been framed for different places for cellular operators;
- (b) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted by the Government into the same;
- (c) if so, the outcome thereof, and
- (d) the reaction of the Government thereto and the steps taken by the Government to make good the said losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir. Department of Telecom has not suffered any loss due to the negligence of its officers in framing rules or due to any other reason relating to cellular operations by the private operators. It has also not suffered any loss on account of the terms and conditions of awarding the licences for the Metro cities i.e., Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Chennai being different than those for the Telecom Circles whose geographical areas generally correspond to that of a State.

- (b) to (d) Does not arise in view of (a) above

Telephone Out of Order in U.P.

500. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA:

SHRI RIZWAN ZAHEER KHAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware that the rural communication system in Uttar Pradesh especially in its Northern areas generally remains dead and telephones lying out of order are not attended to even on written and verbal complaints in Kanpur;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefore;
- (c) the effective steps being taken by the Government to improve the functioning of communication system in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No Sir, the rural communication system is being paid proper attention and faults reported are being rectified with minimum possible time. With the introduction of electronic exchanges in rural areas performance of rural telecom network has improved. The faults are being attended as and when reported.

- (b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.
- (c) The following steps are being taken to improve the functioning of communication system;
 - (i) All the electro-mechanical exchanges are being replaced by latest State of Art modern electronic exchanges.
 - (ii) Overhead lines are being replaced gradually by underground jelly filled type cables.
 - (iii) Replacement of old and worn out dropwire, housewiring telephone instrument etc.
 - (iv) Replacement of old batteries of the exchanges.
 - (v) Arranging additional engine alternators for areas where power supply is not reliable.
 - (vi) Reliable transmission media like optical fibre cable technology are being inducted in the rural network.
 - (vii) WLL and TDMA/PMP technologies and satellite based VPTs will be used to provide the telecom facilities in remote and rural areas.

Kashmir Issue

501. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ambassador of the USA, Mr. Richard Celeste has made uncalled for remarks about the Kashmir issue;
- (b) if so, whether the Union Government have lodged its protest with the US Government;