

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) the time by which these are likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (d). Representations are received from time to time, from various quarters, including the State Governments, for expansion of Metro Channel (DD-2) service of Doordarshan to more areas of the country. While the service is available throughout the country, including the entire State of Gujarat, via satellite by using an appropriate dish antenna system, terrestrially this service is being extended initially to State Capitals and major cities of the country, in a phased manner, depending on availability of resources and inter-se priorities. At present, a High Power TV transmitter (HPT) at Ahmedabad and a Low Power TV transmitter (LPT) at Gandhinagar are relaying Metro Channel (DD-2) service in the State of Gujarat. There is no approved scheme, at present, to set up any additional DD-2 transmitter in the State during the VIII Plan.

[English]

Mobilisation of Funds from Capital Market

2040. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have tried to mobilise funds from the capital market for the promotion of tourism during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof

(c) whether the target fixed for this purpose is likely to be achieved;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the purposes for which the funds are being mobilised from the capital market?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) and (b). The Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI), a specialised public financial institution has raised a sum of Rs.153.65 crores so far, during the current financial year.

(c) to (d). The TFCI envisages raising an additional Rs.100 crores by March, 1997 by way of private placement of unsecured bonds. These funds are being raised to meet the requirements of financial assistance for the tourism industry.

[Translation]

Introduction of Train from Bodh Gaya

2041. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to start

any train between Gaya, Bodh Gaya and Delhi or South India;

(b) if so, the details thereof

(c) whether the Union Government propose to start Varanasi-Tirupati Express and Varanasi-Cochin Express from Gaya; and

(d) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

A.C. Chair Car Facility in Trains

2042. SHRI GOPAL KRISHNA T. : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of trains having A.C. Chair Car facility till date;

(b) the number of superfast trains have been provided with 3-tier A.C. sleeper accommodation in place of chair car accommodation;

(c) whether the Government propose to re-introduce A.C. chair car accommodation as many passengers cannot afford to travel by 3-tier A.C. sleeper in view of steep increase in fares; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Introduction of New Superfast Train

2043. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the inconvenience and difficulties being faced by the large number of passengers travelling on Firozpur-Faridkot-Kotaka Pura-Bhatinda-Delhi route due to the non-availability of any fast express train on this route;

(b) if so, whether keeping in view the rush of passengers on this route and difficulties being faced by

them the Government propose to introduce a Shatabdi train on the Firozpur-Faridkot-Kotkapura-Bhatinda-Delhi route; and

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Punjab Mail and Janata Express provide fast service on the said route, besides one pair of passenger service.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Marathi Channel on Doordarshan

2044. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to refer to reply given to Unstarred Question No.5477 dated September 12, 1996 regarding starting of Marathi channel on Doordarshan and State.

(a) the progress made so far in this regard;

(b) whether the Government of Maharashtra have also approached the Union Government to allot around one hour's time for Marathi in the morning telecast and during the Prime Time telecast on Doordarshan channel;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) There is no change in the position.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra vide his letter dated the 19th August, 1996 has requested that Prime Time between 7.00 p.m. and 8.30 p.m should be exclusively earmarked for 'Mai Marathi'.

(d) Does not arise, as the time slot between 4.30 to 8.30 PM (Monday to Friday) and 4.30 to 7.30 PM on Sunday on DD-I is already dedicated to regional programmes in Marathi.

Basic Telecom Services

2045. PROF. P.J. KURIEN :
SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL :
DR. LAXMINARAYANA PANDEY :
SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that not a single licence has been issued to any one for basic telecom services;

(b) whether no company has accepted the letter of intent so far;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) action being taken in this regard; and

(e) the penalty imposed on the companies for the delay in executing the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e). Out of the seven Letter of Intent holding companies, five of them have accepted the letter of intent for their respective allocated Service Area and the cases relating to the remaining two companies are subjudice in the High Court of Delhi.

Alongwith the Letter of Acceptance, the companies have raised certain issues pertaining to Licence and Interconnect agreements, viz. Assignability of Licence, Interconnect charges, Advance deposit against bills, External Commercial borrowings Force Majeure, Arbitration provisions etc. and these are still being reviewed by the Government.

Non-Functioning of Telephones

2046. COL. RAO RAM SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received complaints of non-functioning of telephones provided to gram panchayats of Mahender Garh, Rewari and Gurgaon Districts of Haryana;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which these telephones are likely to be made functional; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to provide telephones to such Gram Panchayats of the above districts where there are no telephone?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) About 15% Village Public Telephones are reported faulty in Mahendergarh, Rewari and Gurgaon Districts.

(c) These faulty telephones are likely to be made functional by end of January 1997.

(d) Of 531 left over villages in these three districts, 320 are planned to be provided with Village Public Telephones during 1996-97. The remaining 211 villages are likely to be covered during 1997-98.

Villages Connected with Telephone Connections

2047. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of villages connected with/without telephone facilities in the country, State-wise;