

(d) the amount earmarked in this regard, plant-wise;

(e) the expenditure incurred so far and likely to be incurred till completion of the work;

(f) the amount spent on this account during each of the last three years;

(g) whether the Supreme Court has recently passed strictures on the above plants for its failure in implementation of anti-pollution measures; and

(h) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (h) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Basic Telephone Services

339. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL :
PROF. P.J. KURIEN :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether the Department of Tele-Communication has selected the companies for providing licences for basic Telephone Services;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

(c) whether the Government propose to give assistance for raising financial resources to these companies;

(d) if so, the details thereof?

(e) the other assistance proposed to be given by the Government to these companies;

(f) the total number of meetings held between these companies and Telecommunication Department so far on this issue; and

(g) the outcome of these meetings?

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

(b) The details are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) Raising financial resources is entirely the responsibility of the bidders.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

(e) The Government will provide assistance in networking and infrastructural matters as per the tender conditions.

(f) A series of meetings on the the issues pertaining to agreement documents were held during 25.7.96 to 7.8.96, 11.9.96, 17.10.96, 18.10.96 and 24.10.96, to 30.10.96.

(g) a large number of issues have been sorted out.

STATEMENT

Name of the Circles	Name of the Bidders	Date of issue of Letter of Intent
Tamil Nadu	M/s Basic Teleservices Ltd.	13.03.96
Delhi	M/s HFCL Bezeq Telecom Ltd.	04.03.96
U.P. (West)	-do-	-do-
Haryana	-do-	-do-
Orissa	-do-	-do-
Andhra Pradesh	M/s Tata Teleservices Ltd.	13.03.96
Bihar	M/s Techno Telecom Ltd.	13.03.96
Punjab	M/s Eassar Commvision	13.03.96
Gujarat	M/s Reliance Telecom	13.03.96
Maharashtra	M/s Hughes Ispat Ltd.	19.03.96

[English]

Harihar Nath Mela

340. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the 'Harihar Nath Mela' at Sonepur district of Saran, Bihar is the largest cattle fair in India;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government propose to promote it as a National Tourist Cattle Fair;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the amount of financial assistance provided by the Union Government for promotion of Harihar Nath Mela during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) 'Harihar Nath Mela' at Sonepur is one of the largest fairs.

(b) and (c). The Department of Tourism has identified Sonepur Fair for grant financial assistance. The Fair is being promoted the Indian Tourist Offices in India and abroad.

(d) The amount of financial assistance sanctioned during the last three years is as follows :-

1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Nil	3,03,962.00	3,00,000

[Translation]

Late running of Delhi bound Trains

341. SHRI BHIMRAO VISHNUJI BADADE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that all the Delhi bound

trains were running eighteen to twenty four hours late in October, 1996 due to the incidents of accidents

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to avoid rail accidents in future and the relief provided by the Government to the victims of these accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Only Delhi bound trains from South ran abnormally late due to breaches in South Central Railway

(c) A Statement is attached

STATEMENT

(c) Some of the steps taken to prevent train accidents are as under :-

1. The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and important main lines.
2. Signalling circuitry is being changed to prevent home signal from being lowered till the starter and the advance starter lowered for the previous train, have been put back to 'ON' position.
3. Auxiliary warning system for giving advance warning about signals at danger to driver of the running train has already been commissioned on Bombay sub-urban sections.
4. Upgradation of track structure has been done by using heavier rails and concrete sleepers.
5. The track is maintained by Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines. Track is also now being laid with track renewal trains and portal cranes.
6. For monitoring of the track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometers are being progressively used.
7. Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised.
8. To prevent cases of cold breakage of axle, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for timely detection of cases of flaws developing in the axles.
9. Training facilities for drivers, guards and other staff connected with train operation have been modernised. Drivers are being trained on simulators.
10. Performance of the staff is constantly monitored. The staff whose knowledge is

found deficient are counselled and are sent for refresher training.

Soon after the accident, ex-gratia relief is given by railway administration at the rate of Rs 15,000/- to the next of the kin of the dead, Rs.5,000/- in case of grievous injury and Rs.500/- in the case of simple injury in order to meet their immediate expense.

Later on Compensation amounting to Rs.2 lakhs is also paid to the dependents of those passengers who are dead or are permanently disabled in train accidents. For other injuries, the amount varies from Rs.16,000/- to Rs.1,80,000/-.

Besides, prompt medical services are provided to the victims.

[English]

Expansion of Telecom in North-East

342. SHRI BADAI CHOUDHURY
SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether there is any proposal to provide/allot more STD/ISD/PCOs in different parts of North-East States.

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise, Distt-wise, and

(c) the steps taken by the Government thereto?

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

(b) Details of proposed STD/ISD PCOs during 1996-97 are as under :-

S No	Name of State/Telecom Distt	No of PCOs
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	51
2.	Manipur	85
3.	Meghalaya	81
4.	Mizoram	60
5.	Nagaland	65
6.	Tripura	68
7.	Guwahati	300
8.	Dibrugarh	50
9.	Jorhat	40
10.	Silchar	60
11.	Tezpur	20
12.	Naogaon	20
13.	Bongaigaon	30

(c) Exchange capacities are being expanded and STD connectivity to a number of exchanges are being augmented.