

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) No, Sir. The Indira Vikas Patra has been discontinued w.e.f. 16.7.1999.

(b) It has been decided to raise the limits of deposits in Monthly Income Account to Rs. 3 lakhs in case of Single and Rs. 6 lakhs in case of Joint Accounts.

(c) Investment by Banks and Trusts is not permitted in Monthly Income Account. The matter regarding investment by cooperative Societies is under examination.

(d) Does not arise in view of the reply at point (c) above.

PCO/STD/ISD Booths in Assam

2019. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PCO/STD/ISD in Assam in working condition;

(b) the number of applications pending for grant of PCO/STD/ ISD booths in the State during the last three years;

(c) the reasons for not sanctioning the above applications; and

(d) the effective measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) 4931 STD/ ISD/PCOs are working in Assam as on 30-11-99.

(b) 6490 applications are pending in Assam for allotment of STD/ISD/PCO booths.

(c) The applications are pending due to various reasons such as delay in holding the meeting of the allotment Committees, nonavailability of spare capacity in the exchange, non-availability of reliable media in some rural exchanges etc. However, PCO allotment Committees have been abolished.

(d) Recently the PCO allotment policy has been revised to make available STD/ISD/PCOs freely. The measures taken to provide

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more PCOs also include increase in exchange capacity for PCOs, augmenting the exchanges, provision of reliable media etc.

Additional Telephone Connections for Kerala

2020. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the highest number of persons on the waiting list of telephone connections is from Kerala; and

(b) the additional measures taken by Government to give more telephone connections in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) 6.85 lakh applicants are on the waiting list for telephone connections in Kerala as on 1.12.99. 4.00 lakh new telephone connections are planned during the year 1999-2000 and 5.00 lakh new telephone are proposed for the year 2000-01 and further efforts are being made for provision of more and more telephone connections so as to make telephone connection available on demand by 1st April 2002.

Making Petition Postage Free

† 2021. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that PILs are sent by post by public to M.P., Legislators and Ministers of Central and State Governments;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to make such petitions postage free; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) It is not possible to state about the contents of the articles sent through the