

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

post as all articles transmitted through post except the postcards are transmitted in closed condition. To protect the privacy of communications in transmission any act of opening or delaying or detaining of postal article has been made a punishable offence under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898.

(b) & (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

#### **OFC between Nalanda and Bihar Sharif Exchanges**

2022. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 3707 given in Rajya Sabha on the 21st July, 1998 and state:

(a) whether the STD Code 061194 allotted long-long ago to Nalanda exchanges has since been made operational;

(b) if not, the details of the present status/progress made in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to continue to keep Nalanda parented to Bihar Sharif exchange;

(d) if so, the reasons/circumstances which led Government to change their stance; and

(e) if the reply to part (c) above be in the affirmative whether Government would provide sufficient optical fibre connectivity between Nalanda and Bihar Sharif so that Nalanda exchange could be easily and readily accessible from outside?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (e) Each Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA) is allotted a unique STD code; accordingly Nalanda exchange which was earlier in Rajgir SDCA, was allotted Rajgir SDCA's code viz 6119. The code however was not implemented as no media between Nalanda and Rajgir was available. So the exchange was parented to Bihar Sharif. Subsequently due to technical reasons Rajgir SDCA has been merged into Bihar Sharif SDCA. Nalanda exchange thus now has become part of Bihar Sharif SDCA. As a consequence the exchange will continue to remain parented to Bihar Sharif with code 6112. An optical fibre