

Relaxation in Norms for Underground cable connecting Villages in North-East Region

4476. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a restriction of 5 Km. radial distance for underground cable for connecting villages covered by different Exchanges;

(b) if so, whether Government is aware that in the North-East and other hill areas, there is an urgent need for relaxing this norm due to sparse distribution of populations; and

(c) whether Government propose to relax this norm for these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

New Telephone Exchange in Tripura

4477. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for setting up of a new Telephone Exchange in Tripura;

(b) if so, how many such exchnages are proposed to be set up during the next year; and

(c) whether the entire Tripura will be covered under this plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exchange-wise commissioning programme for next year (1999-2000) is not finalised. However, Nine exchanges are proposed to be set up during 1998-99.

(c) Yes, Sir, the above 9 exchanges are proposed to be set up at different places of entire Tripura.

Reduction in Telecom Tariff

4479. SHRI C. . RAMACHAN-DRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a demand from Andhra Pradesh Government to reduce the general telecom tariff in the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Central Government;

(c) whether any efforts have been made to reduce the tariff in view of automation and other technical improvements; and

(d) the steps proposed to reduce telecom tariff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN TJHE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PORKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir.

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

(c) and (d) Tariff rationalisation is a continuous process and appropriate decision is taken based on all relevant considerations such as technology, cost para-metres, traffic parametres, resources re-quiren^ents, etc.

STD booths in some districts of Andhra Pradesh

4479. SHRI C. . RAMA-CHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a demand to increase the number of public STD booths in the districts of Cuddapah and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) the demand presently for this category of phones;

(c) what steps Government propose to make the STD booths more accessible;

(d) whether Government is giving them adequate facilities and help to function better; and

(e) if so, full details thereof?