

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Seminar organised by the Indian astronomical Society at Calcutta

S.T.D. facilities in villages to the nearby town

*65. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHAN-DRAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of towns provided with S.T.D. facilities so far;

(b) the number of additional towns proposed to be taken up in 1991-92 for the provision of S.T.D. facilities;

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to link the villages to the nearby towns to extend the S.T.D. facilities there; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (DR. SANJAYA SINH): (a) 1050 Towns have been provided with STD facility upto 1-2-1991.

(b) 360 more towns are planned to be provided STD facilities during 1991-92.

(c) and (d) The 8th plan objectives for provision of STD facilities are as follows:

(i) All District Headquarters not provided with STD facilities upto the end of 7th plan;

(ii) All Sub-divisional headquarters/ equivalent Tehsils/Block development headquarters;

(iii) All tourists, pilgrimage and growth centres;

(iv) All telephone exchanges of capacity 500 lines or more, as on 1-4-90.

(v) Other auto exchanges Justified by traffic and subject to feasibility.

Villages satisfying criterion mentioned above will also be provided with S.T.D. facility. However, the number of such villages may be very small.

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*66. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a paper submitted at a Seminar organised by the Indian Astronomical Society at Calcutta recently in which it was stated that vital fumes in the Gulf War will severely damage the eco-system and release forces that will interfere with atmospheric temperature and rainfall patterns even in India, if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto;

(b) what is Government's information about the likely impact of the Gulf war of Indian environment and eco-system and what steps Government propose to take in this regard; and

(c) whether the farmers who depend upon rainfall for the sowing of their winter crops, particularly in the arid regions of Rajasthan has been cautioned in this regard, if so, what are the details thereof, and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) A seminar on 'Sun and our Environment' was organised under the auspices of Indian Astronomical Society and Birla Planetarium at Calcutta on 7 and 8 February, 1991 wherein eight papers were presented. One of the papers expressed the view that the soot and toxic emissions from oil field fires in the Gulf will severely damage our eco-system and release forces that will interfere with temperature and rainfall patterns in India. An examination of this in consultation with the Indian Meteorological Department shows that the soot and emissions as a result of fires which have occurred so far in the Gulf have not so far affected weather over India nor are these likely to affect the monsoons. The situation is being closely monitored and action will be taken as warranted.