

(b) The expected date of completion of the project is approximately 30 months from the award of contract and its acceptance.

Discrimination between rural and urban postmen

587. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that due to lack of interest, postal services in the country are badly affected;

(b) whether the Postmen are not getting the normal facilities like pension, gratuity etc. particularly in rural areas;

(c) if so, why does Government discriminate between rural and urban postmen; and

(d) if so, the details thereof including details of such problems existing in the State of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Postmen in rural areas are getting normal facilities like pension, Gratuity etc. However, Gramin Dak Sevak Mail deliverers are engaged in rural areas for part time from 3 to 5 hours a day where the deployment of departmental postmen is not justified. They are governed by separate set of rules.

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

Mobile Phones

588. SHRI MAHMOOD A MADANI:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of mobile phones in the country;

(b) the expected growth rate every year during the next ten years; and

(c) the plan of Government to stop use of illegal mobile phones being imported from different countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) The total number of mobile telephone connections in the country, as on 31st May 2009 are 415.25 million.

(b) At present, on an average 10-11 million mobile phones are being added every month. The growth of mobile telephones was 50.05 % during the year 2008-09. This trend is expected to continue for next few years.

(c) To stop use of illegal mobile phones being imported from different countries, Government has prohibited the import of "Mobile Handsets" (Classified under EXIM Code 8517) without