

Camel Allowance for Mobile Post Offices in Rajasthan

230. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the rate of camel allowance sanctioned in Rajasthan circle for mobile post offices moving on camel backs;

(b) what is the actual expenditure being incurred on a camel for its maintenance; and

(c) whether Government propose to enhance the camel allowance to meet the actual expenses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Camel maintenance allowance is sanctioned at the rate of Rs. 80 per month operating camel mobile post offices in the desert areas of Rajasthan.

(b) There is no definite information available in this regard.

(c) There is no proposal to enhance the camel allowance to meet the actual expenses because the expenses may not conform to a common standard and further a branch postmaster in charge of a camel mobile post office may utilise the animal for his own purposes also.

However, the present allowance may be reviewed, with due regard to economy of expenditure, if there are sufficient grounds and justification.

Sanctioning of Out-of-turn Telephone Connections

231. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of telephone connections sanctioned out-of-turn during the last two years; and

(b) what are the details thereof, state-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Villages without Post Offices

232. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise number of villages without Post Office facilities in the country at present; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to open post offices in these villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

(b) At present there are 1,26,222 rural post offices serving 5,75,936 villages. This can be taken as a reasonable level of development considering that at the time of Independence the total number of post offices in the country, both urban and rural, was only 22,116. The present policy is to further expand the rural postal network in a gradual manner with regard to certain parameters such as population, distance from the nearest existing post office and proportion of anticipated income to cost. Within this framework, preferential treatment is accorded to gram panchayat villages and villages situated in backward and tribal areas. The Sixth Five Year Plan envisages opening of 8,000 additional rural post offices.

Installation of Telephone exchanges in West Bengal

233. SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the progress made so far in the installation of Telephone