

[2 December, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Chennai Passport Office is not of its own even now. That building was constructed earlier. There was some legal dispute, and it is over now. Till now, the new building has not been taken over by the Passport Office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not a question concerning the building. Please excuse me.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, I want to put my second question. The Minister has answered a question regarding the police verification. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister—since passport applications are sent to the Police Department for police verification and they are taking a lot of time in sending reports from to the Passport Offices—whether the Ministry will fix up a time-limit for getting a report from the police officer.

SHRI E. AHAMMED: Sir, usually, it should be done within 30 days, but it is not possible in this respect because it depends upon the State and the region. There are several big States where police verification will, naturally, be delayed. Sometimes when they go for verification, applicant will not be there. However, we have taken up the matter with State Governments to expedite police verifications, at the earliest, so as to enable us to issue passports.

Modernization of Postal Department

*22. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA. Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what measures are being taken by Government to modernise the Postal Department;

(b) how optimally the Department of Posts is utilising V-SATs;

(c) the details of centres that are covered by V-SAT in the country, State-wise; and

(d) what innovative areas the Department of posts is looking for, apart from regular post and e-post?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Department of Posts in the Tenth Five Year Plan is focusing on modernisation in postal operations involving technology and ergonomics. An outlay of Rs. 1062.05 crores out of a total plan outlay of Rs. 1350 crores allotted to the Department has been earmarked for the modernisation activities in the Tenth Five Year Plan. Activity-wise details of the plan outlay are given in statement-I.

(b) The Department is using all 150 VSATs for transmission of Money Orders. Through these VSATs, 62,000 money orders on an average are currently being transmitted daily.

(c) The details of centres that are covered by VSATs in the country, State-wise, are given in Statment-II.

(d) In addition, to regular post and e-post the Department has introduced other services for raising revenue. The important services introduced are listed in Statement-III.

Statement-I*Details of Modernisation Activities and Financial Outlays*

Sr. No.	Plan Scheme/Activity	Tenth Plan Outlay (in Rs. crores)
1	2	3
1.	Computerisation of Post Offices, Administrative and Accounts Offices	836.27
2.	Computerisation and networking of Mail Offices	25.37
3.	Upgradation of Customer Care Centres	11.57
4.	Modernisation of operative/working system (improving ergonomics)	48.50
5.	Automatic Mail Processing Centres at Kolkata & Delhi	71.05
6.	Modernisation of mail movement	21.00
7.	Modernisation of premium products	10.59

1	2	3
8.	Modernisation of Circle Stamp Depots	2.52
9.	Computerisation of international mail processing	3.33
10.	National Data Centre	10.00
11.	Establishment of Express Parcel Post Centres	7.02
12.	e-Post	5.00
13.	e-Bill Post	5.00
14.	Improvement of Quality of Service	4.83
TOTAL :		1062.05

Statement-II*State & Union Territory-wise Details of VSATs in the Country*

Sl. No.	Name of the State/ Union Territory	Name of VSAT Centre	Total No. of VSATs
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Anantpur, Cuddapah, Guntur, Hanamkonda, Hyderabad, Kurnool, Nandyal, Nellore, Nizamabad, Rajamundri, Srikakulam, Tirupati, Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Vizianagaram	15
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	1
3.	Assam	Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Jorhat, Karimganj, Nawgaon, Silchar, Tejpur, Tinsukia.	9
4.	Bihar	Bhagalpur, Chapra, Darbhanga, Gaya, Motihari, Muzaffarpur, Patna, Purnea, Sasaram	9
5.	Chandigarh (UT)	Chandigarh	1
6.	Chhattisgarh	Bilaspur, Raipur	2
7.	Delhi	Ashok Vihar, New Delhi GPO, 56 APO, Parliament Street Dak Bhawan	4
8.	Gujarat	Ahmedabad, Anand, Bhavnagar, Gandhi Nagar, Jamnagar, Mehasana, Nadiad, Navsari, Rajkot, Surat, Vadodara	11
9.	Haryana	Ambala, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Hissar, Karnal, Rohtak	6
10.	Himachal Pradesh	Dharamshala, Mandi, Shimla	3

1	2	3	4
11. Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu, Srinagar		2
12. Jharkhand	Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Hazaribagh		3
13. Karnataka	Bangalore, Belgaum, Bijapur, Devengree, Gulbarga, Hassan, Hubli, Mangalore, Mysore, Shimoga.		10
14 Kerala	Calicut, Ernakulam, Kannur, Kollam, Kotayam, Palghat, Trissur, Trivandrum		8
15 Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore, Ujjain, Jabalpur		5
16 Maharashtra	Aurangabad, Dadar, Mumbai GPO, Nagpur, Nasik, Pune, Ratnagiri		7
17 Manipur	Imphal		1
18 Mizoram	Aizwal		1
19 Meghalaya	Shillong		1
20 Nagaland	Kohima		1
21 Orissa	Behrampur, Bhubaneshwar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Sambalpur		5
22 Pondicherry (UT)	Pondicherry		1
23 Punjab	Amritsar, Bhatinda, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Patiala		5
24 Rajasthan	Ajmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Udaipur		5
25 Tamilnadu	Chennai, Coimbatore, Erode, Madurai, Ooty, Palayamkotai, Salem, Trichy, Virudhanagar		9
26 Tripura	Agartala		1
27 Uttar Pradesh	Agra, Aligarh, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Balia, Bareilly, Faizabad, Ghaziabad, Gonda, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi, Meerut, Saharanpur, Varanasi		16
28 Uttaranchal	Dehradun		1
29 West Bengal	Asansol, Kolkata, Gangtok, Howrah, Siliguri, 99APO		6
30 Goa	Panaji		1
	TOTAL :		15

Statement-III

Services Introduced by the Department in Addition to Regular Post and e-Post

- (a) Speed Post service, Speed Post Passport service
- (b) Express Parcel Post: Parcel service for corporate customers
- (c) Business Post: Service for providing mailing solutions to large volume customers
- (d) Media Post : Facility of advertisements on postal stationery, vans, letter boxes, buildings

- (e) Retail Post: Sale of applications forms, public utility bills collection
- (f) e-Bill Post: Web-enabled service for collecting public utility bills at computerised offices
- (g) Customised surveys for various organisations and collection of data by postmen
- (h) Western Union Money transfer for transmitting money from other countries to India
- (i) Electronic Fund Transfer and Warrant Payment services to ICICI, UTI and Citi Bank
- (j) Retailing of Non life Insurance policies in select circles in collaboration with Oriental Insurance Company Limited
- (k) Sale of Mutual fund schemes of IDBI Principal, State Bank of India, Prudential ICICI
- (l) Marketing of RBI Government Relief Bonds, ICICI Safety Bonds, IDBI Flexi Bonds and ICICI Prudential Pension products.

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Sir, the hon. Minister, in his reply, stated that 62,000 money orders were being transmitted daily. But this is only 10 per cent of the total money orders transmitted. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the measures that he is taking to increase it to 20 per cent through VSATs by the end of the Tenth Plan. The Tenth Plan envisages corporatisation of the postal network in a time-bound manner. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what has happened to that move.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, the VSAT system is working properly and we are able to cover most of the money orders. There is not much delay or any major complaints regarding the deficiency of the service. Simultaneously, we are also realising that most of the money orders are within the Districts/States and that they can be transferred overnight through the normal post. Only in the case of long distance the VSAT services are being used. We also have other ways like the electronic fund transfer (EFT) system which cater to the banking need.

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Sir, the Indian Post Office Act is more than 100 years old and it does not meet the present day requirement. So,

looking at the whole situation, the Government of India formulated a draft Postal Policy in 1999. But, still this Policy for inducting modern technology, private participation, etc., is hanging fire in the Ministry. I would like to know from the Minister as to why the Ministry has taken more than five years to bring the Policy before the Parliament.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: It is under consideration, Sir.

Agreement between India and Nepal

*23.SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA†:

SHRI LALIT SURI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of Nepalese Prime Minister to New Delhi, any agreement or Memorandum of understanding was signed, extending Indian support to fight the maoist insurgency in Nepal; and

(b) the details of specific issues discussed and decisions arrived at as a result thereof and the follow up action taken so far by the two Governments to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) All issues of common concern and interest including the problem of Maoist insurgency were discussed during the visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to India from September 8—12, 2004.

No Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding, extending Indian support to fight the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, was signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to India. However, the Government of India is committed to strengthening bilateral cooperation in diverse areas, including security related cooperation, with His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

श्री कलराज मिश्र : मान्यवर, माननीय मंत्री जी ने जो उत्तर दिया है, वह प्रश्न का जो पहला भाग है, उसका पूर्ण उत्तर नहीं है। मैंने पूछा था कि क्या हाल में नेपाल के प्रधानमंत्री की नई दिल्ली यात्रा के दौरान, नेपाल में माओवादियों के विद्रोह से निपटने के लिए भारतीय सहायता उपलब्ध कराने के संबंध में किसी करार या सहमति-ज्ञापन पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए थे? प्रश्न के दूसरे भाग में हमने यह पूछा था कि चर्चा किए गए विशिष्ट मुद्दों और इसके परिणामस्वरूप लिए गए निर्णयों का ब्यौरा क्या है?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kalraj Mishra.