

SHRI INDRAMONI BORA (Assam): Sir I associate with the Special Mention made by my friend. Thank you.

**Concern over unchecked spread of hepatitis-C virus
in the Country**

SHRI ANAND SHARMA (Himachal Pradesh): Sir, the unchecked spread of Hepatitis-C in the country has assumed alarming proportions. It is estimated that, in the National Capital Region of Delhi alone, four lakh people are suffering from this virus and the number of people afflicted in the country is much more. According to experts, the number is rising steadily because of low awareness level in non-specific symptoms that make diagnosis difficult and is a long drawn process. Hepatitis-C was first detected in 1989, and is relatively a new entrant in the epidemiology scene. The virus is blood-borne and is commonly transmitted through blood and blood products or through infected syringes. There are also instances of transmission from mother to unborn child or through sexual intercourse. The rapid spreading of the virus among intravenous drug users is another cause of serious concern.

Sir, Hepatitis-C, unlike most other types of hepatitis, has no relation to water or food contamination. Though it has a similar mode of transmission as Hepatitis-B, The advent of this dreaded virus has remained largely unchronicled. It is shocking that even though this virus has been around for fifteen years, the awareness levels have remained low and the methods of diagnosis poor and inadequate. In view of the near fatal characteristics of this disease, it was expected of the health authorities to undertake research for its prevention and cure. Also, there is a real need to educate the people especially the vulnerable sections of the society to check its spread. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare needs to take urgent measures to monitor and control the disease.

SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, I associate with the Special Mention made by Shri Anand Sharma. Thank you.

**Need to provide High Bandwidth Internet Connectivity to Rural
citizens of Andhra Pradesh**

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the only way to bring the benefits of information technology to the rural citizens is by providing them with high bandwidth internet connectivity free

of cost. This will also help in PURA (Providing Urban amenities to the Rural Areas). The Prime Minister had recently announced Rs. 12,000 crores towards achieving PURA. The Government of Andhra Pradesh is willing to set up an experimental high bandwidth network with a 10G backbone to districts, 1G to *mandals* and 100/1000 mbps to villages. The Government of Andhra Pradesh will also provide computer access, content and capacity building at an affordable price of Rs. 5 per day. This would be possible if the BSNL can provide access to one pair of unit dark fibre throughout the State. The BSNL can share the revenue and have access to back-up bandwidth. The Government of Andhra Pradesh would also be willing to pay for a proportional share of the book value of the unused fibre on a lease basis. It would be ensured that this does not adversely impact the Public Switched Telephony Networks within the State. The unused bandwidth capacity of the BSNL can be made available to this project on an interim basis. There is a potential for huge economic benefit from this experiment. The Government of Andhra Pradesh would be utilizing only the unused, unexploited and unproductive assets of the BSNL.

Keeping the above facts in view the Government is requested to take an early decision and instruct the BSNL officials to make the information highway a reality, as requested by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Keeping in view its importance, I urge upon the Government to kindly take necessary steps in the matter.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, I associate myself with what Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy has said.

Demand for a law to permit mercy killing or euthanasia to allow dying persons to donate the parts of their bodies

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, the *karma* of life is a wheel and is complete only when birth is complemented by death. It is irony that laws allow a person to donate his organs if he is 'brain dead', but not when he knows that he is going to die within a few days. Kolavennu Venkatesh's battle, who had already lost battle for life due to muscular dystrophia, for his organ harvest even by stopping his heart beat medically did not melt the hearts of administrators. He screamed for euthanasia. His mother treid frantically and kept running from pillar to post for her son's organ harvest. But it also did not yeild results. Why are we not allowing mercy killing when the same is allowed in other developing countries, like