

telephonic reminders to subscribers who do not pay their bills by the "pay-by date", initial disconnection of the facility for outgoing calls followed by final disconnection, issue of registered notices, disconnection of other working telephones of the subscribers, adjustment of deposits, and finally legal action in justified cases.

(c) and (d) BSNL has been following the above-mentioned measures on a regular basis to recover its dues from subscribers. Some amount, however, remains outstanding due to various reasons, including disputes, litigation and deliberate defaults by some subscribers. Its efforts have, however, been able to ensure that over 91% of the bills issued during a month are generally realized by the end of the second following month.

### **ISD Call Racket**

1562. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "ISD call rackets thrive in capital" as reported in the 'Statesman' dated the 31st December, 2002;

(b) if so, whether MTNL and VSNL have been losing crores of rupees per month on such call rackets;

(c) if so, whether MTNL and VSNL are not having any foolproof system to check such rackets;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the plans formulated to check such rackets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Many ISD call rackets have been detected through surveillance or source information. But it has not been possible to exactly estimate this loss.

(c) and (d) These rackets are run through illegal long distance channel and are difficult to be monitored. The rackets are detected through surveillance or source information. The monitoring has become more difficult with the multi-operator regime.

(e) Decision to install Fraud Management Control Equipment has been taken which will help in detecting such frauds to some extent.

**Branch Post Offices in H.P.**

†1563. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prescribed criteria are relaxed for opening of sub-post offices in far-flung, hilly and border State like Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details of the terms and conditions where relaxation is provided;

(c) the number of sub-post-offices to be opened and upgraded in the State during the Ninth Five Year Plan period and whether the target has been achieved;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the target set for the Tenth Five Year Plan period alongwith the details of the action plan to achieve the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) There is already a set of relaxed criteria prescribed for opening of Sub Post Offices in far-flung, hilly and remote areas, including those in H.P., details of which are given in statement-I (*See below*).

(c) and (d) The details of targets given for opening/upgrading the Sub Post Offices and those finally opened/upgraded in Himachal Pradesh subject to fulfillment of norms during the Ninth Five Year Plan period are given in Statement-II (*See below*).

(e) Targets set out for the Tenth Five Year Plan period are given in Annexure-C. New Post Offices are targeted to be opened each year under Plan scheme subject to fulfillment of prescribed norms and availability of requisite resources.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.