

(c) The Issue Price of Rice, Wheat and Sugar under the BPL category, by the Central Government, is as under :

	Rs. per Kg.
Rice	5.65
Wheat	4.15
Sugar	13.50*

* retail issue price of levy sugar under PDS.

Communication services in Jharkhand

†*677. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of sub-standard level of the essential services like Post, Telegraph and Telecommunication in Jharkhand;

(b) whether there is a need to improve the above services in the State; and

(c) if so, what instructions have been issued for improvement of these services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Basic Postal facilities in terms of daily delivery and collection and of dak and sale of postage stamps are being extended to all parts of the country, including Jharkhand. Other postal facilities are extended through post offices which are opened subject to fulfilment of distance, population and income norms. The average area served by a Post Office in Jharkhand is 24.26 Sq. Kms. which compares well with the all India average of 21.17 Sq. Kms. Efforts are being continuously made to improve the access of the network, subject to compliance of norms and availability of resources, and also to improve the quality of postal services

The quality of Telegraph Services measured as percentage of telegrams delivered within 12 daylight hours has been 89% and 90.21% during 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 respectively. However, while essential telecom services provided by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in Jharkhand are satisfactory, there are areas where, due to reasons such as inadequate road infrastructure, erratic power supply and extremists problem, difficulties are being faced in maintaining the telecommunication services.

Improvement of telegraph and telecom is also an ongoing process and continuous efforts are being made to improve it. In the case of telecom services, the following instructions have been issued.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

1. Introduction of 5 Pair cable and 5 Pair internal Distribution Points (DPs) in all exchange areas.
2. Rehabilitation/ upgradation of outdoor network on regular intervals.
3. Replacement of life expired telephone instruments in phased manner.
4. Replacement of non life expired paper core cable in phased manner.
5. Opening up of more and more Remote Switching Units (RSUs)/ Remote Line Units (RLUs) to reduce cable length.
6. Induction of Digital Loop Carriers (DLCs) with Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) in the network.
7. Centralized fault booking at Sub Divisional Charging Centre (SDCC) through Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS).
8. Provision of reliable transmission media to all exchanges in phased manner.
9. Replacement of all analogue exchanges by digital electronic exchanges.
10. Opening up of new RSUs/RLUs with poleless external plant.

Procurement of Foodgrains in Bihar

†*678. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the number of FCI centres in Bihar for procuring foodgrains at support price along with their location;

(b) the target of procurement for the last year and current year along with the details of procurement as on date;

(c) whether procurement of foodgrains is far behind the target and procurement at some centres is negligible; and

(d) if so, the action being taken by Government to meet the target?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) The Procurement Centres (location-wise) opened by the FCI for the procurement of paddy/wheat in Bihar during the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2002-03 and Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2003-04 are given in the enclosed Statements I&II (*See below*).

(b) and (c) The estimate of the State Government for procurement of Paddy during the KMS 2002-03 is 3.75 lakh MTs, against which the procurement, as on 2nd May 2003, was 1.71 lakh MTs. The quantity of paddy procured in the corresponding period last year was 1.33 lakh MTs. Paddy could not be purchased during the current KMS at 18 out of the 100 centres opened by the FCI, mainly due to the paddy not conforming to Fair Average Quality (FAQ) standards.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.