

(d) the reasons for handing over these coal to the private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) to (c) The Government have allocated following coal blocks in the command area of Western Coalfields Limited located in the Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh to Government/private companies for captive mining:—

Name of the block	Name of the allottee
Mandla South	M/s. Madhya Pradesh State Mining Corporation
Mandla North	M/s. Jaiprakash Associates Limited
Sial-Ghoghri	M/s. Prism Cement Limited
Rawanwara North	M/s. SKS Ispat Limited
Brahampuri	M/s. Pushp Steel and Mining Limited

Further, Government have identified two more coal blocks namely Tandsi-III & Extn. and Thesgora-B/Rudrapur, located in Chhindwara district, Madhya Pradesh and invited applications for allocation of these blocks, for captive use. These two coal blocks have been earmarked for allocation for captive use of production of iron and steel and production of cement to eligible companies based on relative merit. No company has been identified for allocation as yet.

(d) As per the provisions of the Coal Mines Nationalisation Act, 1973, coal blocks are allocated to eligible companies both public and private, to bridge the gap between demand and supply. The blocks identified are those which are not required by Coal India Limited for their production programme upto the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

BSNL Mobile connections in Kerala

3252. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB PEEVEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a vast mismatch between demand for BSNL mobile connections in the State of Kerala and the capacity of the organisation to give connections; and

(b) if so, how Government proposes to ease the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA):

(a) No, Sir. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is providing mobile connections in Kerala Circle on demand for the current year. In addition, purchase orders have already been placed for 10.15 lakh lines capacity expansion of mobile network in Kerala Circle.

(b) The connections are being provided on demand. The position will further improve on expansion of mobile network as stated in (a) above.

Status of private operators

3253. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the private operators who have been issued Letter of Intents (LoIs); and

(b) the time-frame by which they can operate their services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA):

(a) Out of 121 Letters of Intent (LoIs) issued in January, 2008, 120 Unified Access Services (UAS) licence agreements have been signed with 16 private companies. M/s Datacom Solutions Pvt. Ltd. has not submitted compliance of LoI for Punjab Service Area and therefore the LoI has been cancelled.

In addition, 5 LoIs were also issued to M/s ByCell Telecommunication India Pvt. Ltd. in February, 2008. The UAS licence agreements with M/s ByCell Telecommunication India Pvt. Ltd. have not been signed till date.

(b) As per terms and conditions of the UAS licence agreement, the licensee has to commission the applicable systems within one year from the effective date of licence.

Guidelines for optimal usage of spectrum

3254. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is going to frame guidelines for optimal usage of spectrum;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the measures taken by Government for increasing rural tele-density through this effort?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA):

(a) and (b) In order to ensure optimum use and equitable allotment of scarce spectrum resource, the criteria for spectrum allotment are based on the active subscribers, peak traffic of the operator's network and demographic features of the service area. These criteria are reviewed from time to time taking into account relevant factors and technological developments. The latest orders in this regard are based on TRAI recommendations and have been issued in January, 2008.

(c) The spectrum is allotted for the complete service area and thus, does not constrain the operators from rolling out the service in any part of the service area, including rural areas. To increase connectivity in rural and remote areas, a scheme has been implemented under the 'Universal Service Obligation Fund' to provide subsidy for shared passive infrastructure (towers, etc.) in certain specified rural and remote areas.

Non-functioning of roaming facilities of MTNL

3255. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR:
SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL cellular phones were unable to roam in BSNL network for a full three days from 21st to 24th March, 2008; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to ensure that such contingencies do not arise in future?