

(b) The expected date of completion of the project is approximately 30 months from the award of contract and its acceptance.

Discrimination between rural and urban postmen

587. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

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

(a) whether it is true that due to lack of interest, postal services in the country are badly affected;

(b) whether the Postmen are not getting the normal facilities like pension, gratuity etc. particularly in rural areas;

(c) if so, why does Government discriminate between rural and urban postmen; and

(d) if so, the details thereof including details of such problems existing in the State of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Postmen in rural areas are getting normal facilities like pension, Gratuity etc. However, Gramin Dak Sevak Mail deliverers are engaged in rural areas for part time from 3 to 5 hours a day where the deployment of departmental postmen is not justified. They are governed by separate set of rules.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Mobile Phones

588. SHRI MAHMOOD A MADANI:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

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

(a) the total number of mobile phones in the country;

(b) the expected growth rate every year during the next ten years; and

(c) the plan of Government to stop use of illegal mobile phones being imported from different countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) The total number of mobile telephone connections in the country, as on 31st May 2009 are 415.25 million.

(b) At present, on an average 10-11 million mobile phones are being added every month. The growth of mobile telephones was 50.05 % during the year 2008-09. This trend is expected to continue for next few years.

(c) To stop use of illegal mobile phones being imported from different countries, Government has prohibited the import of "Mobile Handsets" (Classified under EXIM Code 8517) without

International Mobile Equipment Identify (IMEI) number or with all Zeroes IMEI, with immediate effect, vide Notification Number 112 (RE-2008)/ 2004-2009, dated 16th June 2009 issued by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Further, Department of Telecom has issued directions to all Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS)/Unified Access Service (UAS) Licensees to make provision of Equipment Identification Register (EIR) in their network so that calls without IMEI or that with all zeroes are not processed and rejected after 30th June 2009.

Landline Telephones

589. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) by when the Government plans to cover all the villages in the country by landline telephones; and

(b) whether Government would encourage private telephone operators to put up landlines in different parts of the country with a condition that they must cover rural and remote areas including border areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) Government has planned to provide Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in all the uncovered villages in the country, as per Census 2001, by February, 2011. These VPTs may either be on landline or Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) or Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) etc.

(b) As per present policy of Unified Access Service Licences (UASL), there is no roll out obligation for Private Basic Service Operators (PBSOs) to provide telephones in rural areas. However, USO Fund is being extensively deployed for providing subsidy support to increase the penetration of telecom for provision of telecom facilities in rural areas. Apart from Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), PBSOs are also participating in various schemes for provision of telecom facilities in rural areas under subsidy support of USOF through bidding process.

Software Aayusoft

†590. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made investment in the software "Aayusoft" developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Pune;

(b) if the answer to the "a" above is a 'yes' the amount invested therein;

(c) total amount spent by CDAC on the development of 'Aayusoft'; and

(d) whether it would not be appropriate that Government provide the entire amount spent on development of 'Aayusoft' to CDAC as grant, and make 'Aayusoft' available to common people for free on the internet?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.