

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT) : (a) and (b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has sent a consolidated revised proposal to Department of Telecommunications to consider various amendments in the TRAI Act, 1997 including amendment of Section 29 of TRAI Act which *inter-alia* provides for imposition of penalty on telephone operators for violation of its directions.

(c) and (d) Government has not so far taken any final decision in this regard

Universal service obligation charge

†3510. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD :

SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI :

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

(a) whether it is a fact that a cess as universal service obligation charge is being collected from each telephone subscriber in the country;

(b) if so, the total amount collected through it till June, 2009;

(c) the purpose for which this cess is collected from subscribers; and

(d) the amount spent till the end of June, 2009 for fulfilling the desired purpose out of the total amount collected so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Universal Service Levy (USL) is collected by the Government from various service providers (except pure value added service providers such as voice mail, e-mail etc.) operating in the country at the rate of 5% of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR). As on 30 June, 2009 a total amount of Rs. 26,207.11 crores has been collected as USL since the inception of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in April, 2002.

(c) The USL is collected to raise resource for meeting the Universal Service Obligation (USOF) for providing telecommunication services in rural and remote areas of the country.

(d) As on 30 June, 2009, out of the total collection of Rs. 26,207.11 crores, Rs. 8,378.88 crores have been disbursed for USO Fund activities and Rs. 6,948 crores have been reimbursed to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) towards payment of license fee and spectrum charges to Department of Telecommunications.

Independent Spectrum Regulator

3511. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been actively considering to set up an Independent Spectrum Regulator to solve spectrum related issues in the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the corrective steps Government proposes to take to streamline the process of allotment of spectrum?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

BWA Spectrum

3512. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV :

SHRI VIRENDRA BHATIA :

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

(a) whether Government proposes to auction Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) spectrum also alongwith 3G spectrum;

(b) if so, the details thereof and how much more spectrum in each of the BWA bands is going to be made available in subsequent years;

(c) whether the base price of BWA spectrum is 50 per cent of the base price of 3G spectrum;

(d) whether DOT carried out any study to ensure that the BWA services will be viable in the rural and far flung areas at this price; and

(e) if not, how does DOT propose to make these services affordable in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Guidelines were issued for auction of Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) spectrum. 2 blocks each of 20MHz are available in 2.3 GHz and 2.5 GHz bands. Out of this one block of 20MHz has been allocated to MTNL in Delhi and Mumbai/Metro Service Areas and BSNL in other Service Areas at a price equal to the highest bid in the respective areas.

(c) Guidelines were issued for auction of BWA spectrum on 1.8.2008 with some amendments on 11.9.2008. As per the guidelines, the reserve price for 20MHz in Time Division Duplex (TDD) mode spectrum was fixed at the rate of Rs. 80 Crore for Metro & Category 'A' Circles, Rs. 40 Crores for Category 'B' Circles and Rs. 15 Crores for Category 'C' Circles.

However, an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) has been constituted on issues relating to auction of 3G Spectrum. As per terms & reference, the EGoM will also examine the reserve price for BWA spectrum in the relevant bands.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) A scheme to provide broadband connectivity to approximately 2 Lakh villages is under consideration. The rest of the villages will be covered in a phased manner. In this scheme financial