

(e) whether CAG would audit the accounts of all telecom companies irrespective of dealing with mobile and fixed services, NLD and ILD, internet or SAT services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. CAG has conveyed that it will audit the accounts of Reliance, Bharti, Vodafone, Tata and BSNL in the current year.

(c) As conveyed by CAG, it will audit the books of accounts of all telecom service providers on a regular basis. In the current year, the audit of the accounts of Reliance, Bharti and Vodafone, Tata and BSNL has been taken up.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of (c) above.

Foreign citizen coming of India

*285. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any regulations for foreign citizens coming to India for long term stay, based on H-1B status; and

(b) if not, whether Government is planning to take steps to remove mention of this regulation from the Visa application forms available from Indian embassies in several countries, and from other official sources like Government websites?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The long term stay visas are granted to the foreign citizens, by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad, based on the rules and regulations issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

Tariff cuts by telecom operators

*286. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has decided to intervene in the recent tariff cuts offered by telecom operators by seeking information/business case/costs of operators;

(b) if so, the objective thereof and the provision of TRAI Act under which it has thus acted;

(c) whether TRAI believes that this is a case of predatory pricing;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor, especially given the relatively small market size of the operators in question?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) There is, at present, no proposal for intervention by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in the tariff offered by telecom operators.

(b) TRAI had asked the operators to provide information on the business models of these tariff plans as part of the tariff examination process. Regulation of Tariff has been mandated to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) *vide* the TRAI Act of 1997. TRAI, in exercise of its powers, has issued Telecommunication Tariff Order (TTO) 1999 (as amended from time to time). As per the 30th Amendment to TTO dated 16.01.2004, Telecom companies are required to report to TRAI any new tariff for telecom services and changes in the tariff within 7 days after its implementation for information and record of TRAI after conducting a self check to ensure that the tariff plans are consistent with the regulatory principles in all respects which *Inter alia* include Interconnection Usage Charges (IUC) Compliance, Non-discrimination and Non-predation.

(c) As per TRAI, operators have submitted that it may be too early to make any realistic assessment of the sustainability of these tariff offers or the actual impact on the overall revenues since the tariff plans have been in the market only for few months.

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

(e) TRAI had asked operators to provide information as part of tariff examination process and this include operators as per Statement (*See below*) with both big and small market shares.

Statement

List of Operators

Following is the list of operators who were asked to provide information on the recently introduced tariff plans :-

1. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited.
2. Tata Teleservices Limited and Tata Teleservices (Mah.) Limited.
3. Sistema Shyam Teleservices Limited.
4. Unitech Wireless Private Limited.
5. Reliance Communications Limited.
6. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited.
7. Bharti Airtel Limited.
8. Vodafone Essar Cellular Limited.
9. Idea Cellular Limited.
10. Dishnet Wireless Limited (Aircel).
11. HFCL Infotel Limited.
12. Loop Telecom Private Limited.
13. S Tel Private Limited.