

telephone or cellular mobile telephone having sufficient lines or connections to be called as "toll free number" or "consumer care number" or "helping number" or "special number", as the case may be at its Call Centres. The staff at the Call Centre is to be easily accessible and available to the consumers for redressal of grievances. Service providers are also mandated to provide docket numbers for all the complaints booked by subscribers.

(e) TRAI is taking quarterly statement from all the service providers regarding number of calls booked and resolved at Call Centers. It has also notified a regulation on standards for quality of service of basic telephone service and cellular mobile telephone services, mandating that every service provider shall meet the quality of service benchmarks in respect of both namely network service quality parameter and customer service quality parameters. TRAI monitors the performance of the service providers against the benchmarks and parameters laid down in quality of service regulations through monthly and quarterly performance monitoring reports. TRAI also undertakes objective assessment of the quality of service of mobile services through independent audit and survey agencies. The results of these audit and survey are widely published for information of all the stakeholders.

Agricultural pricing system

*391. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has, recently, stated that the agricultural pricing system should be made more market-oriented by delinking support prices from procurement prices;

(b) if so, whether Government proposes to bring sweeping reforms in the agricultural pricing systems and to achieve the targeted growth in agriculture;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the other steps Planning Commission proposes to take to protect farmers in the new reforms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY):

(a) to (d) No, Sir. The present price policy of the Government for agricultural commodities seeks to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce with a view to encouraging higher investment and production, and also to safeguard the interest of consumers by making available supplies at reasonable prices. The Government decides on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various agricultural commodities *inter-alia*, taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and also incorporating the views of concerned State Governments and Central Ministries/Departments and other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of Minimum Support Prices.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan document has also stated that if the needs of procurement to maintain adequate stocks of food grains require procurements prices to be higher than MSP, a transparent mechanism is needed that enables Government to undertake commercial purchases at prices comparable to those paid by private traders. This could be done if the procurement price (i.e. MSP plus bonus) was announced at the beginning of the purchase season, along with a procurement target in terms of quantity. After the procurement target was met, the bonus would be suspended. However, if procurement quantities, even with bonus are not met, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) should be able to tender from both domestic as well as international markets, after standard procurement operations, to make up the deficit to maintain stocks with the FCI. (Reference: Eleventh Five Year Plan Document Vol.II, Chapter 4.1 on Food and Nutrition Para 4.1.26)

The Plan also recognizes that the improved performance in agriculture is necessary if the growth is to be inclusive. Hence, measures as warranted to enhance agricultural production and protect the interest of the farmers are taken from time to time.

Upgradation of postal network

†*392. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has examined the need to streamline the functioning of the Department of Posts in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of schemes pertaining to the investment of funds for upgradation of technology of postal network to compete with private sector; and
- (d) the details of other commercial use of the vast network of Department of Posts spread across the country by Government?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir. The department has felt the need to revitalize the entire post office network in the country by developing the post office as a pivot for civic and governance activities, especially in rural areas.

(b) The Department has undertaken a massive overhaul of its infrastructure and core operations in mail, money remittances, banking and insurance services through IT induction at an unprecedented scale. The aim is to make the neighbourhood Post Office, the focus for delivery of all

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.