

The Ministry is constantly monitoring MTNL's performance and has directed MTNL to make all efforts to improve its operational parameters. Further, with a view to make MTNL a result oriented organization, Government has constituted a six member Search-cum-Selection panel headed by Cabinet Secretary to hire Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of MTNL on contract basis with a fixed term of three years. The term can be extended for a further period of 3 years, based on performance evaluation by an external Expert Group.

Rural telephony

1980. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the CAG has recently pulled up the Department of Telecommunications for not utilizing funds of over Rs. 18000 crore collected for promoting rural telephony;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the Department has misrepresented details regarding these unused sums of money; and

(d) if so, the action Government has taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) and (b) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) in paragraph number 1.7.1.1 of its Report No. PA 1 of 2008 *inter-alia* observed that:-

(i) As on March, 2007, only Rs. 5081.44 crore, *i.e.* 33.87 per cent of Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund had been utilized out of total funds of Rs. 14,998.98 crore collected.

(ii) The amounts collected as Universal Service Levy (USL) from service providers were not credited fully to the USO Fund by the Government.

The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 provides that the sums of money received towards the USO (USL) shall be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI) and the Central Government may, if Parliament by appropriation made by law in this behalf so provides, credit such proceeds to the fund from time to time. During the financial years 2002-03 to 2006-07, final

allotments amounting to Rs.5081.44 crore, received through Parliamentary approvals in the respective years were transferred to USO Fund in the concerned years and the entire allocation was fully utilized in the respective years.

The Indian Telegraph Act was amended in 2006 to extend the support of activities of USO Fund to new areas such as mobile infrastructure and services, broadband connectivity, general infrastructure and pilot projects and new schemes have been launched accordingly since 2006. With the implementation of new schemes in rural and remote areas after 2006, the outgo from USO Fund shall increase substantially.

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

Outsourcing of 3G mobile services

1981. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) plans to outsource its 3G mobile services; and

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor?

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

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Improvement of broadband connectivity

1982. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has agreed to award BSNL a Rs. 18,000 crore project to improve broadband connectivity in the country;

(b) whether Government has put any collateral conditionalities for granting the Wi-Max network to BSNL;

(c) by when BSNL will extend the broadband connectivity to all the Panchayats in the country;