

[5 May, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

Based on the above approach, the Tamil CD mentioned earlier was released. It is thus an important and meaningful step done consciously as a matter of policy. The significance of the CD release is that still a large number of users (and potential users) do not have access to internet and the concept of downloading is still alien to many of the first timers.

Apart from Tamilnadu, nationwide and worldover also, this initiative has been receiving enormous positive response. Within a short period of 2-3 days, close to 20,000 downloads of the contents took place and over 26,000 requests for CD & registration were received. This showed the response to the timely and much needed initiative of this kind from the user/potential user community.

Telecommunication facilities in Bihar

4529. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the areas in Bihar which are deficient in telecommunication facilities;

(b) the requests received in this regard the last year and the current year so far;

(c) the action taken thereon; and

(d) the proposals for expansion of these activities in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) (i) The waiting list in Urban and Rural Areas in Bihar as on 31.03.2005 is 27385 and 69486 respectively. This waiting list is almost evenly spread in the entire State.

(ii) There is unfulfilled demand of mobile connection in almost all districts of Bihar which is due to controlled supply of SIM cards due to capacity constraints of GSM network.

(iii) The availability of power supply is very poor in Bihar which is affecting the operations of telecommunication services.

(b) Registration for new telephone connection is a continuous process. 1,21,403 connections have been provided during 2004-2005. Waiting list as on 01.04.2004 was 1,21,465. Total waiting list as on 01.04.2005 is 96,871.

(c) and (d) There is a plan to provide 1,22,000 connections of land lines, 1,69,000 connections on WLL and 12,00,000 on CMTS during 2005-2006.

Denial of U.S. visa to Gujarat Chief Minister

4530. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that USA has rejected India's request for review of the decision on denying a visa to Gujarat Chief Minister;

(b) if so, the details of the reasons stated by the Government of USA in this regards;

(c) Government's reaction in regard thereto;

(d) whether Government would deny visa to U.S. citizens wishing to visit India on similar grounds; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Government learnt on 18 March, 2005 of the US decision to deny a visa to Shri Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat. The visa had been requested by the Ministry of External Affairs through a Note Verbale to the US Embassy on 28 February, 2005. The Government conveyed its views to the US Government that this action displays a lack of courtesy towards a constitutionally elected Chief Minister. A protest was lodged with the Embassy and reconsideration of its decision was urged. The US Embassy announced on March 21, 2005 that the US had not revised its decision of March 18. The Government conveyed its regrets that in spite of its demarche, the US had not reconsidered its decision.