

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) M/s Reliance Communications Limited [M/s RCL] and M/s Reliance Telecom Limited [M/s RTL] have requested for pre-mature exit from the universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme of shared mobile infrastructure for 4537 sites (out of the 5118) and 781 sites (out of the 3864) respectively stating following unjustifiable reasons keeping in view the well known nature of rural & remote areas for which, the said USOF supported scheme was launched specifically:

- Very low subscriber acquisition primarily due to remoteness of the sites.
- Delay in commissioning of mobile tower sites by IP [part A] resulting in non USOF sites capturing a substantial portion of the potential market and unprecedented economic slowdown resulting in loss of revenue on an overall basis & substantial increase in the capex and operation cost.
- Sites being located in difficult terrain and Naxalite affected areas.

As regards M/s Bharti, there is no such request pending as on date on the contrary, M/s Bharti has expressed its interest for performing the same work as a substitute of M/s RCL/RTL at USOF sites in Bihar.

(b) Yes. Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of the (b) above.

(d) At present there is no exit provision/ clause in place in the agreement for shared mobile infrastructure scheme supported by USOF.

(e) Intent and objective of the scheme was to incentivize & financially support the provision of mobile services in uncovered villages/rural habitations having population of 2000 & above in order to make the service providers venture into such areas to perform and not to provide them an easy exit path to go away without performing after winning the contract thereby jeopardizing the implementation of USOF supported scheme itself.

Visually impaired-friendly websites

998. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of Indian websites that have their audio versions for the benefit of the blind;

(b) the steps taken by Government for making the internet accessible for the visually impaired; and

(c) whether all the sites owned by Government are equipped for access by the visually impaired?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) Currently there are only a few Indian websites that have audio versions for the benefit of the blind.

(b) The steps taken by Government for making the Internet accessible for the visually impaired are as follows:

- Department of Information Technology has formulated a draft National Electronic Accessibility Policy in consultation with stakeholders.
- National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed Guidelines for Indian Government Websites which enables accessibility for visually challenged.
- Cabinet Secretary has also advised all the Ministries/Departments to make their websites compliant with guidelines and thus making them accessible to visually impaired.
- NIC also provides necessary advisory & technical support to Ministries/ Departments in making their websites compliant with the guidelines.

(c) No, Sir.

Poor voice quality in cell phones of BSNL/MTNL

999. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received large scale complaints regarding poor voice quality in cell phones of BSNL/MTNL operators;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to retain the BSNL/MTNL subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) and (b) Though BSNL/MTNL are, in general, meeting the quality of Service (QoS) benchmarks prescribed by Telecom Regulatory Authority of