

TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) Recently, several mobile operators have increased tariffs applicable for certain plans and packs offered by them.

(b) Regulation of Tariff has been mandated to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) vide the TRAI Act of 1997. As per the current tariff framework in vogue, tariff for mobile services is under forbearance except for roaming services (ceilings prescribed by TRAI). Therefore, the operators have the flexibility to offer different tariffs depending on the market conditions and other commercial considerations. These tariffs have however to be consistent with the regulatory principles prescribed by TRAI.

(c) The hike effected by the telecom operators is not across the board, but for certain plans/schemes and for certain categories of calls. The major change is in respect of on-network Local and STD charges which have been restructured to be at par with off-net call charges. The service providers have attributed this change to increase in the cost of providing service, decline in profitability, to improve the quality of service despite spectrum constraints and to bring in uniformity in the on-net charges vis-a-vis off-net usage charges.

(d) Mobile operators have been revising the tariff both upward and downward, in accordance with the market dynamics. However, as a whole, the tariff for telecom services has been showing consistently downward trend for several years. TRAI has issued regulatory prescriptions as per which the existing subscribers are protected from any hike in tariff for a certain specified period. Operators have assured TRAI that tariff for the existing subscribers will be protected against hike in accordance with the regulatory mandates.

TRAI recommendations on spectrum pricing

2055. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH:

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether TRAI had made recommendations on spectrum pricing in May, 2010 and subsequently in February, 2011;

(b) whether TRAI has recommended current price of spectrum as Rs. 1769.75 crores per MHz for spectrum upto 6.2 MHz and Rs. 4571.87 crores per MHz for spectrum beyond 6.2 MHz;

(c) whether TRAI has recommended these two spectrum prices for application at the time of renewal of licence and for charging excess spectrum held by operators beyond contracted 6.2 MHz, respectively;

(d) whether these recommendations have been accepted or rejected by Telecom Commission; and

(e) if not, the reasons for delay and the time-frame for giving finality to these recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) Sir, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had submitted its recommendations dated 11.05.2010 on 'spectrum Management and Licensing Framework' and dated 08.02.2011 on 'The Value of Spectrum in 1800 MHz band'.

(b) and (c) As per recommendations dated 08.02.2011 and subsequent clarifications dated 03.5.2011, TRAI has recommended that the 'current price' of 1800 MHz spectrum (Pan-India) for the year 2010 (with effect from 01.04.2010) for period of 20 years may be adopted as Rs. 1769.75 crores per MHz for spectrum upto 6.2 MHz and Rs. 4571.87 crores per MHz for spectrum beyond 6.2 MHz. TRAI has recommended that insofar as the price of spectrum upto 6.2 MHz is concerned, these figures will also be relevant for renewal of existing licences subject to the condition that these figures will be duly adjusted for inflation. TRAI has also clarified that the very concept of 'current price' is in respect of 'excess spectrum' which denotes spectrum beyond the contracted amount.

(d) and (e) These recommendations of TRAI are presently under consideration of the Government. Being a policy matter, it is not feasible to specify a time frame for a decision.

TRAI recommendations on entry of new UAS licences

2056. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in its recommendations on spectrum and licence related issues in 2005, 2007 and 2010 TRAI had recommended the continuance of entry of new UAS licences at the same level as determined in 2001, through auction to have a level playing field; and