

which may take at last 400 days and indicating that there will be a time gap between cessation of licenses as per Supreme Court order and completion of auction.

A Review Petition has also been filed by the Government before Supreme Court on 02.03.2012, bringing out the issues, among others, relating to separation of functions between different organs of the State, specially highlighting the function of policy making. In the Review Petition the Government has made it clear the Government is not seeking in any manner to overturn the order quashing the 122 licences issued in 2008.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has made a reference to TRAI on 03.02.2012, seeking recommendations on the auction of 2G Spectrum. A pre-consultation paper on the issue of “Allocation of spectrum in 2G band in 22 Service Areas by auction” was issued by TRAI on 3rd February, 2012. Thereafter a consultation paper on ‘Auction of Spectrum’ was issued by TRAI on 07th March, 2012. In order to ensure that the mobile users of these companies continue to receive service, TRAI has issued instructions to all licensees, whose licenses have been ordered to be cancelled by the Apex Court, to ensure Quality of Service during the period of four months, as per the license conditions.

#### **National Knowledge Network**

1922. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to democratize information through projects such as the National Knowledge Network (NKN) and the Gram Panchayat Network;

(b) if so, the details thereof including total allocation for this project in the Twelfth Five Year Plan;

(c) whether the NKN aims to connect top universities, Science and Research institutions and Central institutions like IITs, IIMs, etc; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT) : (a) to (d) Government of India has approved a Project on 25.03.2010 for setting up of the National Knowledge Network (NKN). The outlay approved for the project is Rs. 5990 cr. over a time frame of 10 years. The implementing agency of the project is National Informatics Center (NIC).

The objective of the NKN is to inter-connect all knowledge institutions across the country through high speed data communication network to encourage sharing of resources and collaborative research. NKN is to facilitate creation, acquisition and

sharing of knowledge resources among the large participating institutions seamlessly across the nation and globally. It is to bridge the existing knowledge gap in the country. It would help the country evolve as a Knowledge Society and spur economic activities in the knowledge domain.

A separate network is planned to take optical fiber based connectivity to Gram Panchayats of the country by the Department of Telecommunications. The Estimated cost of the project is Rs. 20,000 crores.

NKN has already extended the connectivity to IITs, IIMs, ISRO, DRDO, CSIR, ICMR, ICAR, DAE, Medical, NITs, NIFTs, State and Central universities. Till date, 681 institutions have been connected through NKN.

#### **VRS for employees of BSNL**

1923. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that BSNL is going to shelve one third of its present manpower through Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) route; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA) : (a) and (b) A proposal from BSNL has been received in the Department of Telecommunications regarding a Voluntary Retirement Scheme aiming to reduce the work force by around one lakh.

#### **Opening of new post offices**

1924. SHRI KANWAR DEEP SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has received proposals from various State Governments to open new post offices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and location-wise; and
- (c) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT) : (a) and (b) A proposal for opening of Post Offices has been received from Chhattisgarh Government during the current financial year for opening of 1927 new rural branches of post offices at 1927 Gram Panchayat Headquarters.

- (c) Department of Posts has included it in its 12th Plan Proposal and has presented it to the Planning Commission.