

**Free mobile roaming facility**

†1614. SHRI BRIJLAL KHABRI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to provide free mobile roaming on all networks throughout the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) and (b) Being a predominantly tariff issue, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has reduced ceilings on Roaming Charges with effect from 1st July 2013. Vide 55th Amendment to TTO, 1999, TRAI has mandated the Wireless Access Service providers to offer special roaming tariff plans in which the subscribers can avail partially free roaming, or fully free roaming in lieu of payment of fixed charges. However, it is one of the objectives of National Telecom Policy 2012 to work towards “One Nation-Free Roaming”.

**Prepaid mobile connection**

†1615. DR. YOGENDRA P. TRIVEDI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the connection of prepaid mobile subscribers having a balance of Rs. 20 would not be deactivated;

(b) whether Government has framed such rules for prepaid mobile subscribers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) to (c) Most of

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

the Mobile Service Providers has prescribed a condition of deactivation of the Cellular Mobile Telephone connections remain inactive for a certain specified period. Prior to 22.03.2013, such deactivation were resorted to irrespective of the balance amount in the account of the pre-paid consumer, causing inconvenience to genuine consumers. With a view to protect the interests of the consumers while seeking to ensure better utilization of scarce numbering resources, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has put in place certain regulatory guidelines through the Telecom Consumer Protection Regulation, 2012 (Sixth Amendment). The Regulation, which became effective on 22.03.2013, *inter-alia*, contains the following guidelines:-

- (i) There shall be no deactivation if the balance in prepaid consumer account in Rs. 20/- or more;
- (ii) The mobile connections of prepaid consumers shall not be deactivated for any period of non-usage less than 90 days;
- (iii) For the purpose of usage, a voice call/video call (incoming or outgoing) or an outgoing SMS or a data usage of Value Added Services, or payment of rental (in case of post paid connection) etc. shall definitely fall in the scope of activity; the service provider may prescribe any other activity as well;
- (iv) An 'Automatic Number Retention Scheme' shall be implemented for prepaid consumers on payment of reasonable charges upto Rs. 20/- per 30 days;
- (v) A consumer whose connection is deactivated shall be given a grace period of at-least 15 days within which he can reactivate the same number;
- (vi) Consumers shall be transparently communicated the terms and conditions of deactivation of SIMs due to non-usage;
- (vii) The service providers are required to implement a Safe Custody Scheme for postpaid consumers.