

**Reducing mobile tariffs**

1442. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether telecom regulator, TRAI has proposed allowing for sharing of all telecom spectrum within a circle, which may reduce cost of mobile services and will benefit the consumer for cheaper voice and data services;
- (b) if so, Government's views and reaction thereto;
- (c) whether it is a fact that many mobile service providers are increasing their mobile tariff more than double in a year after successful one paisa per second call plan;
- (d) if so, Government's response thereto; and
- (e) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government for cheaper mobile tariff in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) TRAI had submitted its recommendations on 'Guidelines on Spectrum Sharing' to the Government on 21st July, 2014. TRAI has proposed that the Operators whose entire spectrum holding in a particular band (900MHz/1800MHz) is/has been liberalized would be permitted to share spectrum without any additional one time spectrum charge. The matter is under consideration of the Government. Further impact on tariff of sharing of spectrum cannot be assessed as tariffs are function of many factors.

(c) and (d) As per the existing tariff framework, tariff for telecommunication access service is under forbearance except for National Roaming and Rural Fixed Line Services. The service providers have the flexibility to decide various tariff components for different service areas of their operation. Tariffs are offered by service providers taking into account several factors including input costs, level of competition and other commercial considerations. Hike and reduction of different tariff components by telecom service providers is a regular feature and these changes vary for different plans/special tariff vouchers and service areas.

(e) TRAI has, in the past, issued several regulatory guidelines for the cheaper mobile tariff and to protect the interest of the consumer and enhance transparency in tariff offers. Some of the measures for cheaper mobile tariff in the country are given below:

- (i) Protection has been given against hike in tariff as per which no tariff item in a tariff plan shall be increased during six months from the date of enrolment of a consumer into that plan. Further, no such hike is permitted during the promised validity period. In case of lifetime plans the tariff protection extends to the entire licence period of service provider.
- (ii) Telecom Tariff Order (TTO) 51st Amendment dated 20.04.2012 has mandated every service provider to offer to the subscribers at least one pre-paid and one post-paid tariff plan with pulse tariff of one second for local and national long distance calls.
- (iii) TTO 55th Amendment dated 17.06.2013 has reduced the ceiling tariff for various types of calls while roaming. In addition, the service providers have been mandated to offer special tariff plans for roaming (RTP and RTP-FR). The subscribers can avail partially free roaming or fully free roaming in lieu of payment of fixed charges, by subscribing to these plans.

#### **International SIM cards**

1443. SHRI S. THANGAVELU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has extended the permit period to sell international SIM cards to three years from the one year earlier, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that there are about 70 companies in the country involved in this business?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department of Telecom (DoT) issues the No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the companies, who apply for sell/ rent of international calling card/SIM cards in India, The period of validity of this NOC has been extended to three years from one year earlier.

(b) As on date 39 (thirty nine) companies are holding valid NOC to sell/rent international calling card/SIM cards in India.

#### **Mobile network facilities in remote areas**

†1444. SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.