view of this, all the mobile operators including MTNL have at least one tariff plan where incoming calls are free in national roaming where the subscriber is expected to pay fixed charges for availing this facility.

Pension to retired employees

1349. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL employees retired prior to 2007 have been promised pension at the same rate as had been sanctioned to employees retired post 2007 as per the recommendations of the Second Pay Revision Committee of Central Public Sector Enterprises;

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

(c) the time-frame within which the arrears would be paid to such ailing retired employees, if not, already paid, to address their long-standing grievances?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD) : (a) and (b) The recommendations of Second Pay Revision Committee of Central Public Sector Enterprises were regarding pay revision of serving employees with effect from 1.01.2007 and did not relate to pension revision of retired employees of Central Public Sector Enterprises including MTNL. However, Pension rate as provided in CCS Pension Rule 1972 is applicable uniformly to retirees of Pre and Post 2007 and is given on their last pay drawn at the time of their retirement.

(c) It has been decided by the Government in 2014 that payment of pensionary benefits to all categories of the erstwhile employees of the Government (Group A, B, C and D) absorbed in MTNL who have opted for pension on combined service will be made by the Government in the same manner as in BSNL with effect from 01.10.2000. Accordingly action has been initiated. As regards time-frame, payment of pension including arrears, if any, is a continuous and ongoing process.

Telecom equipment sourcing and testing

1350. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA :
SHRI A.U. SINGH DEO:

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

(a) whether Government is aware that unfettered supplies of telecom equipments

from foreign vendors, including Chinese companies, are making the system susceptible to spyware and malware from unfriendly countries and anti-national activists;

(b) if so, the facts and the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government proposes any standards, guidelines and order in the country for testing of critical telecom equipments, as these have the potential to become easy conduits for spying and leakage of information; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and steps taken to overhaul the telecom equipment sourcing and testing process in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) The modern age telecom equipments are prone to spyware/malwares etc., if attempted by the outfits, antisocial/anti national activists or unfriendly country. Such spyware/malware, if embedded in any of the telecom network elements by vendors or any other third party source, may damage the concerned network element causing disruption in services, infecting other network elements or leakage of information to unintended users.

The licensed Telecom Service providers are free to purchase telecom equipments for building their network from vendors of various countries based on their techno-commercial considerations, subject to complying with various license terms and conditions including security related terms & conditions. The standards developed and adopted by International Telecom Union (ITU), 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) and 3rd Generation Partnership Project-2 (3GPP2) are generally used globally by various telecom equipment manufacturers/vendors. Generic Requirements/Interface Requirements for various network elements used in telecommunications are being issued by the Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC) of the Government of India based on International Standards, global best practices and keeping Indian requirements in view.

However, in order to address the security concerns of the nation related to telecom and telecom networks, the Government has issued the amendment to various telecom licenses (*i.e.* Access Services, National Long Distance and International Long distance Services licenses on 31.05.2011 and Internet Service Providers and VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) service providers on 03.06.2011) in consultation with Ministry of Home affairs and telecom Industry, wherein it is *inter-alia* mandated that Licensee shall induct only those network elements into the network, which have been got tested as per relevant contemporary Indian or International Security standards established/mandated by any International Agency/Laboratory of the respective standards. Subsequently these security guidelines have been included as an integral part of Unified License (UL).

A pilot lab has already been established at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru to develop security standards, test processes and test tools for telecom equipment testing and security certification. It is envisaged to upscale this lab to full-fledged lab. The developments of systems, processes, security standards, test procedures, test tools, etc., for telecom network elements which are large in numbers, is a time taking exercise. Also understanding security standards, protocols, etc., is a complex and voluminous task. Further, there are no readily available standards and processes for security testing of telecom equipment as the issue of establishing security standards for telecom equipment has been realized only recently by international standard making bodies like 3GPP.

The Government has already taken a decision to set up Telecom Testing and Security Certification Centre to develop systems, processes, adopt/develop security standards, test tools, etc., for telecom equipment security testing and certification. Based on these standards, processes and tools, the Centre would accredit the test labs for security testing and certification of telecom equipment used by various Telecom Service Providers. Such test labs can be set up/established under private or public or joint venture entity.

Withdrawal of plan to provide Wi-Fi hotspots

1351. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is going back from its plan to set up Wi-Fi hotspots in 25 cities all over the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) No, Sir. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has identified 153 locations in 30 cities till June 2015 for providing wi-fi services. BSNL has already launched public wi-fi hotspots at tourist spots such as Taj Mahal (Agra), Sarnath, Assi Ghat (Varanasi), Jagannath Temple (Puri), Konark Temple (Puri), Khajuraho Temple (Khajuraho), Thanjavur-Brihadeeswara Temple (Thanjavur), Trimbakeshwar Temple (Nasik) and Hussain Sagar lake and Charminar (Hyderabad).

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

Import of wheat

†1352. SHRI HARIVANSH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is planning to import wheat on a large scale despite adequate availability of wheat in the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.