

(a) whether Government has taken cognisance of the TRAI's comments in the Supreme Court, which suggest that terrorists are able to purchase SIM cards with ease due to absence of Aadhaar;

(b) whether TRAI has provided any evidence or data in this regard, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the specific action being taken by Government to ensure that terrorists are not able to get SIM cards, in light of the TRAI's submission?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Sir, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has not filed such affidavit in Hon'ble Supreme Court.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

#### **Free roaming service**

†2288. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is not giving directions to telecom operator companies for free roaming service under some pressure, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) if not, by when the free roaming service would be provided to mobile customers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Sir, "One Nation - Free Roaming" is one of the objectives of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012. Being a predominantly tariff related issue, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), having legal authority to determine tariff, floated a consultation paper on 'Review of Tariff for National Roaming' on 25.02.2013. As per the comments received from the stakeholders, majority of the stakeholders were not in favour of Home Price Rule (HPR) in the national roaming service. Stakeholders were strongly averse to a regime in which incoming calls while on national roaming would become free.

After analyzing the comments received from the stakeholders, a view was taken by TRAI that fully free national roaming across all the tariff schemes may result in cross subsidization of roaming subscribers at the expense of non-roaming subscribers, and also it may create arbitrage opportunity.

Through the Telecommunication Tariff Order (60th Amendment), 2015 dated 09.04.2015, TRAI has made the following changes in the tariff regime for national roaming, which came into effect from 01.05.2015:-

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- Reduced the ceilings tariff for voice calls and SMS while on national roaming.
- Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have been mandated to offer a Special Roaming Tariff Plan to its pre-paid and post-paid subscribers. In Special Roaming Tariff Plan, incoming voice calls while on national roaming shall be free, on payment of fixed charge, if any. All the wireless access service providers have at least one tariff plan in which the incoming calls, while roaming, are free.

**Investment on optical fibre cable system**

2289. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has exclusive investment and usage of optical fibre cable laid throughout the country;
- (b) if so, the amount of money invested and areas covered by that network system; and
- (c) whether a prominent private sector company which advertises for 4G facilities through optical fibre cable throughout the country, is relying upon this Government investment on lease or on a separate system?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) No Sir, however National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) was planned, in 2011, to connect all the 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country with an estimated cost of ₹ 20,100 crore through optical fibre cable utilizing existing fibres of PSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and Power Grid and laying incremental fibre wherever necessary to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and Blocks, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis. An amount of ₹ 3054.43 crore has been released, as on 31.10.2015, by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL).

State-wise number of Gram Panchayats (GPs) which have been connected with optical fibre in the country under National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) as on 06.12.2015 are given in the Statement (*See below*).

- (c) No such proposal has been received by the Government.