

of drive tests are shared with the service providers for improving Quality of Service and coverage in the areas identified in the Drive Tests.

In order to resolve call drop issues, the Department of Telecommunications has also been undertaking various steps including meeting with the service providers at CMD (Chairman and Managing Director)/CEO (Chief Executive Officer) level to evaluate the performance against action plan for improving call drop scenario; making available plenty of spectrum resources in different bands for which auction process has recently concluded, wherein the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have acquired 965 MHz of Spectrum. Moreover, the Department is also facilitating necessary permissions in Central Government Buildings and Estate on shareable basis to roll out new sites in affected pockets.

Department of Posts (DoP) has issued guidelines on 21.07.2016 for use of postal buildings for BTS-installations. Further, Department of Defence has issued the detailed policy guidelines for installation of Mobile-BTS (CoW) in Cantonment Areas.

The TSPs have reported that they have already installed more than 1,20,000 additional BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) across the country during 3½ month period from 15th June, 2016 to 30th September, 2016 and further plan to install about 1,56,000 additional BTSs across the country up to 31st March, 2017. The TSPs have also informed that about 4,97,000 BTSs have been optimized for improvement in Network Performance during June, 2015 onwards and in addition, frequency re-planning done for more than 4,25,000 BTSs for handling interference issues.

The dropping of calls in wireless network cannot be completely eradicated as it is a world-wide phenomenon and happens in every wireless network due to various reasons including poor radio coverage, radio interference, loading of available spectrum, change in pattern of traffic, shutdown of sites due to power failures etc.; however, both the Government and TRAI are taking all possible steps with the help of TSPs to address the problem of call drop and bring it down within the permissible limit.

Facilities to BSNL users under 4G

1978. SHRI SHAMSHER SINGH MANHAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a telecom operator has provided lot of facilities including free data, calling SMS under 4G upto December, 2016; and

(b) if so, whether Government plans to provide such facilities at the same rates to BSNL users?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, a telecom provider has recently launched 4G services and is providing facilities like free data, free voice calling, free SMS upto December, 2016.

(b) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has not yet launched the 4G services.

Upgradation of postal banking system

1979. SHRI K. G. KENYE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to tie up with banking institutions to upgrade the Postal Banking System, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether expressions of interest have been received from different financial institutions therefor; and

(c) whether Government proposes to associate with public sector banks to strengthen the public sector and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes Sir. Cabinet has approved the proposal for setting up of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) under the Department of Posts. The IPPB, once operationalized, proposes to tie-up with banks, insurance companies, mutual funds houses, international money transfer operators, pension products providers and other permitted third party financial service providers to address the lack of access to basic financial services for citizens in rural and under-served areas.

(b) No Sir. While the Department is in various stages of discussions with various financial institutions, no formal expression of interest has been received.

(c) As per RBI's mandate for payments Bank and the approval of the Union Cabinet, India Post Payments Bank may act as Business Correspondent of banks (including Public Sector Banks) for furthering financial inclusion in the country.

Disinvestment of BSNL and MTNL

1980. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal of disinvestment of BSNL and MTNL;

(b) whether any communication has been received by the Ministry on this matter from NITI Ayog; and