

[19 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

**Withdrawal of facilities from All India SC/ST Telecom Employees Welfare Association**

1649. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any letter or Office Memorandum was received by the Deptt. of Communications regarding withdrawal of facilities provided to earlier All India SC/ST Telecom Employees Welfare Association; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by the MTNL Management thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The department had written a letter to CMD, MTNL and BSNL on 28.5.2004, requesting them to formulate their own rules and plans for extending certain facilities to SC/ST Welfare Associations in consultation with National Commission for SC/ST. The matter is in process in MTNL.

**Public sector telecom growth**

1650. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government owned telecom companies have failed to keep pace with the private sector in the country;

(b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;

(c) whether the telecom growth in private sector has increased manifold than that of public sector; and

(d) if so, the details of the plans formulated to increase the public sector telecom growth in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Comparative table showing total telephone connections working with Government owned PSUs and Private Operators as on 31st March for the last four years and their growth rate during last three years is given below:

|                 | Government PSUs (N<br>Telephone Connections<br>(in lakh) | ITNL+BSNL) Private Operators |                                    |                |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
|                 |                                                          | Growth<br>Connections        | Telephone<br>Connections (in lakh) | Growth<br>Rate |
| As on 31-3-2001 | 324.5                                                    | —                            | 38.4                               | —              |
| As on 31.3.2002 | 381.62                                                   | 17.6%                        | 68.06                              | 77.2%          |
| As on 31-3-2003 | 431.71                                                   | 13.1%                        | 114.46                             | 68.2%          |
| As on 31-3-2004 | 464.83                                                   | 77%                          | 300.57                             | 162.9%         |

(d) In order to ensure increase in the Public Sector Telecom Growth following steps have been taken:

- (i) Government PSUs BSNL and MTNL have targeted to provide 105 lakh telephone connections during current year 2004-05, out of which 90% are Cellular and Wireless Local Loop (WLL) connections which are cost effective and preferred by customers.
- (ii) Cabinet has approved reimbursement of Licence Fee and Spectrum Charges to BSNL on year to year basis during Tenth Five Year Plan for meeting losses incurred by BSNL in Rural Telephony.

#### Access to IT

1651. SHRIV. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is growing gap between the rich and the poor in terms of access to information technology;

(b) whether it is a fact that middle class people are not able to afford computers;

(c) what steps Government would take to make available at reasonable prices the simple computers with internet, e-mail and other simple functions;

(d) whether any efforts has been made to make computers available within the reach of middle class; and