

(a) whether it is a fact that our companies have developed simputers and these are now in use in the country, and

(b) if so, the details of this latest model of computer and how far it would help us to record additional data and provide additional benefits to the users?

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

(b) Simputer is a versatile hand-held data collection and processing device. Its features include colour display, Indian language support, internet connectivity, interface for printer, etc. As it is based on Open Source Software, it can be used for appropriate applications in areas such as:

- Crop data collection
- Land records
- Village information dissemination
- Agricultural Produce Marketing (APMC) auction yards
- Literacy and education
- PDS (ration-shop) inventory control
- Microcredit
- Telemedicine
- Map-based applications:
 - Disaster Management
 - Resource surveys
- Electricity meter reading

Simputer can also be used for sending/receiving e-mails in English as well as in Indian languages and surfing the internet. Being a hand-held, battery operated device, Simputer can be used in the field where normal PCs cannot be used for want of normal electric power in places such as villages and remote areas.

Spectrum policy

1662. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) by when, Government are going to come out with a comprehensive policy on spectrum to redress the several problems that are being faced by the telecom operators,

(b) whether any consultations have been started by TRAI in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) TRAI has issued a consultation paper on Spectrum related issued viz. "Efficient Utilization, Spectrum Allocation and Spectrum Pricing" and comments have been received from various stakeholders. Open House discussions are proposed to be held by TRAI in few cities during August and September, 2004. Recommendations when received from TRAI, would suitably be considered for revision of the existing National Frequency Allocation Plan, 2002

Mobile phone sets in N.E.R.

1663. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of mobile phone sets in the North-Eastern States;

(b) the names of the sub-division of Tripura covered/not covered by mobile phones;

(c) whether the terrorist prone areas have been covered by mobile phones,

(d) whether all out efforts would be taken to cover the major towns of the State of Tripura within a shorter time-frame, and

(e) whether more sets of mobile phones would be made available for Agartala?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The number of cellular phone users in North Eastern States as on 31.07 2004 are 1,62,812.

(b) Sadar and R K. Pur Sub-Divisions of Tripura have been provided with Cellular mobile services. The sub-divisions of Tripura where mobile