

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) The progressive outstanding balance at the end of March 2017 in respect of Indira Vikas Patra is ₹ 884.75 crore.

(b) In so far as Indira Vikas Patra is concerned, no application was necessary for its purchase and there was no provision to mention details of investors/purchasers on the Indira Vikas Patra and records, hence the amount lying unclaimed cannot be disbursed unless Indira Vikas Patra is presented at the Post Office by customers. However, a Senior Citizen Welfare Fund has been established by the Ministry of Finance to utilize the unclaimed money lying in the Post Office Small Saving Schemes.

#### **Steps to check call drops**

61. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government undertook any assertive step to check the call drop problem which is becoming a stumbling block in Government's ambitious Digital India programme, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of the telecom service providers against whom highest number of call drop complaints have been received during the last three years; and

(c) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) In order to facilitate improvement and expansion of telecommunication services, the Government has initiated a series of measures which includes:

- (i) making available sufficient spectrum for mobile services including auction of 965 MHz in 2016,
- (ii) allowing Spectrum Sharing, Trading and liberalisation of administratively allocated spectrum as per the guidelines to facilitate efficient utilisation,
- (iii) permitting sharing of active as well as passive infrastructure by the telecom service providers for achieving higher utilisation efficiency,
- (iv) notification of Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 in November 2016 for regulating underground infrastructure (optical fibre) and over-ground infrastructure (mobile towers),
- (v) periodic review of expansion of mobile networks and related improvements carried out by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs)- leading to addition

of around 6.35 lakh additional Base Transceiver Stations on aggregate basis for 2G/3G/4G services during the period- July 2015 to November 2017,

- (vi) launching of Interactive Voice Response Service (IVRS) on call drop to get direct feedback from mobile subscribers and sharing the feedback with TSPs – since its launch TSPs have resolved approximately 50,770 individual cases by taking remedial actions until 31st October 2017 and the call drops reported by individual subscribers have shown a drop of over 8% in the last 10 months.
- (vii) facilitating use of Government estate for installation of mobile towers on multiple-sharing basis,
- (viii) launching of Tarang Sanchar, a public web portal for information sharing on mobile towers and their EMF compliances, in May 2017.

As a result of the continuous efforts put-in by the Government and other stakeholders, consistent improvements have been noted in compliance to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) Quality of service benchmarks for both 2G and 3G services.

As per latest TRAI's Performance Indicator Report for the quarter, April to June 2017, all TSPs providing 2G and 3G services comply to TRAI's Call drop benchmark of  $\leq 2\%$  for Licensed Service Area (LSA) as a whole. Further, compliance to another benchmark, Worst affected cells having Traffic Channel (TCH) drop rate with benchmark  $\leq 3\%$  has also improved consistently. For 2G services, non-compliance in this regard has significantly decreased from 54 in quarter ending September 2015 to 14 in quarter ending June 2017. For 3G services, non-compliance in this regard has significantly decreased from 20 to 11 in the corresponding period.

In order to further improve customer- experience, TRAI has notified the amended Quality of Services (including Call drop rate) benchmarks with effect from 1st October, 2017 for 2G and 3G services and have also included 4G mobile services in its scope. As per TRAI, Call drop rate will be measured on per-Cell basis instead of existing methodology of average of all Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) in a given Licensed Service Area (LSA). It will remove the anomaly due to averaging of bad cells with good or excellent performing cells and are more stringent.

Besides, financial disincentives have been revised by TRAI to deal with cases of persistent non-compliances. While the ceiling for first time violation against a given benchmark has been enhanced from Rupees One lakh to a maximum of Rupees Five lakh per quarter. In case of repeated non-compliance, it has been raised from Rupees Two lakh to a maximum of Rupees Ten lakh per quarter.

(b) The major telecom service providers against whom highest number of Call drop/Improper Network Coverage complaints have been received in Department of Telecommunications in the last three years *i.e.* from 1st January 2015 to 6th December, 2017 include M/s Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) – 2,622 ; M/s Bharti Airtel (Airtel) – 2,597 ; M/s Vodafone Essar (Vodafone) – 1,309 ; M/s Reliance Communications (R Com) – 1,251 ; M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm (R Jio) – 946 (services started in 2016) ; M/s Idea Cellular (Idea)- 802, M/s Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL)- 473 and M/s Aircel Cellular (Aircel) – 255.

As per TRAI, major telecom service providers against whom highest number of Call drop complaints have been received in the last three years *i.e.* from 1st January 2015 to 8th December, 2017 include M/s Bharti Airtel (Airtel)– 546, M/s Vodafone Essar (Vodafone) - 346 ; M/s Idea Cellular (Idea) – 166; M/s Reliance Communications (RCom) – 157; M/s Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited(BSNL) – 70; M/s Aircel Cellular (Aircel) – 37; M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm (RJio) – 26 (services started in 2016); M/s Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL)- 19.

- (c) The remedial actions taken by the Government in this regard includes;
- (i) Close monitoring of performance of service providers, against the benchmarks for various quality of Services parameters including those for call drop rate as laid down by TRAI through periodic reports from service providers,
  - (ii) Conduct of customer surveys, independent network audit and undertaking service drive-test of mobile networks in select cities, highways, and railway routes,
  - (iii) Review meetings with service providers to evaluate the performance and action plan including for call drop parameters,
  - (iv) Imposition of financial disincentives for non-compliance with the benchmarks for quality of Services parameters, and
  - (v) TRAI benchmarks for call drop rates have been amended with effect from 1st October 2017 to help identifying local areas where Cell(s) have not performed well for many days and also to identify Day(s) on which many cells in the network of a service provider have not performed well.

### **5G Services**

62. SHRI SANJAY SETH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has set up a high-level forum that will evaluate and approve roadmap and action plan to bring in the latest technology in the country to roll out 5G services;