

Free telephones for Internet Service

2434. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give free telephone connections for internet service; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above. .

Tuticorin-Colombo Ferry Service

2435. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India opposing the proposed Tuticorin-Colombo Ferry Service citing the activities of the banned Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE);

(b) whether it is also a fact that the benefits of the proposed Ferry Service in terms of trade would be minimal and would be largely symbolic and that the availability of a cheap ferry service would further give a fillip to drug smuggling apart from attracting potential asylum seekers; and

(c) whether it is also true that the said Ferry Service proposal was deferred earlier by the Government when the Hon'ble Chief Minister had opposed the said move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Tuticorin-Colombo passenger ferry service with suitable infrastructure established at the entry/exit points will provide an economical mode of transport, which is mutually beneficial to the economic, social and cultural advancement of the two countries.

(c) The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to resume the Tuticorin-Colombo passenger ferry service was examined in a series of inter-ministerial meetings at which representatives of the Government of Tamil Nadu also participated. It received Cabinet approval on June 5th 2003. However, the signing of the MoU has been deferred taking into account the views expressed by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Jobs for America Act

2436. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that US have introduced the jobs for America Act;
- (b) if so, the salient features thereof; and
- (c) to what extent it would help/affect the Indian IT professionals who desire to go to USA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a).Yes, Sir. A bill titled "Jobs for America Act of 2004" was introduced in the US Senate on 12 February, 2004 by Senator Thomas Daschle. The bill is still under consideration of the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labour and Pensions.

(b) The bill proposes to amend the US Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, which seeks to provide notice about plant closing, mass lay off etc. The amendments seek, *inter alia*, to:

- (j) extend the scope of application of WARN Act to include off shoring of jobs¹ apart from plant closing or mass lay off;
- (ii) extend the period of the notice to be given from 60 days to 90 days;
- (iii) stipulate preparation of annual reports on off-shoring of jobs by Secretary of Labour. The report should include information regarding number of jobs affected due to off shoring, the location to which these jobs are transferred or shifted, the reasons for such shifting or transfer etc.