

1	2
2 Year	6.50%
3Year	7.25%
5Year	7.50%
Post Office Recurring Deposit	7.50%
Monthly Income Account (MIA)	8.00% (bonus on MIA @10% of the deposit also payable at maturity. Bonus has been withdrawn on new accounts opened <i>w.e.f.</i> 13.2.2006.
National Saving Certificates (VIII) issue	8.00%
Public Provident Fund	8.00%
Senior Citizen Saving Scheme-2004	9.00%
Kisan Vikas Patra	Amount double in 8 years 7 months

- (ii) There is no proposal currently under consideration of Government to revise the rate of interest on small saving schemes.

Mobile phone connectivity in hilly areas

2463. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the position of mobile phone lines connectivity in hilly areas particularly in Himachal Pradesh is not satisfactory;
- (b) if so, whether Government propose to improve the mobile phone connectivity in Himachal Pradesh;
- (c) if so, whether Government have formulated any scheme for this purpose;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) The mobile services are provided by telecom service providers in all the twelve districts in Himachal Pradesh Telecom Circle which also includes most of small towns and villages in hilly areas. However, in hilly areas, it is difficult to provide adequate coverage at some places due to hilly terrain.

For improving the mobile connectivity in these areas, the telecom service providers are continuously augmenting their mobile network infrastructure and optimizing the same.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) monitors the performance of the mobile networks against the quality of service benchmarks through quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports.

Guidelines for telemarketing calls

2464. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that to stop telemarketing calls from private companies, TRAI has issued guidelines but now these private companies are marketing through SMS and send lots of SMSs to any number; and

(b) the steps Government would take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, TRAI has issued a Regulation titled 'The Telecom Unsolicited Commercial Communications Regulations, 2007' for putting in place a mechanism called National Do Not Call (NDNC) Registry' for curbing the unwanted telemarketing calls/messages. In addition, Department of Telecommunications (DoTs) has issued guidelines for registration of telemarketers. These steps have been taken by TRAI and DoT to curb the menace of unsolicited telemarketing calls/messages.

As per the Regulation, any subscriber who does not want to receive unwanted telemarketing calls/messages can register his/her telephone number in the NDNC Registry through his/her Telecom Service Provider.

The definition of Unwanted Commercial Communication stipulated in the Regulation not only covers voice calls but also SMSs.

Merger of BSNL and MTNL

2465. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:
SHRI P.R. RAJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to merge BSNL and MTNL in the name of MTNL for efficient functioning of the telecom sector; and

(b) if so, by when the proposed merger would take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) A consortium of consultants led by M/s ICICI Securities, appointed by the Government to advise and aid the Government in restructuring of MTNL and BSNL for achieving higher synergies in their operations, has suggested some options for restructuring. Since the enabling conditions for the suggested options are not appropriate enough to lead to a successful merger and considering the complexity of the issues involved, the restructuring of BSNL and MTNL has been put on hold for the time being.