

(VRS) to the employees of age 50 years and above, administrative allotment of spectrum for providing 4G services, monetisation of assets, debt restructuring by raising of sovereign guarantee bonds and in-principle approval for merger of BSNL and MTNL. Accordingly, BSNL/MTNL have offered Voluntary Retirement Scheme to their employees on 04.11.2019 which is open till 03.12.2019. The revival plans for BSNL and MTNL were proposed after considering all relevant aspects including, *inter-alia*, the recommendations of consultants, suggestions received from different Unions/Associations and approval of the revival plan by the respective Boards of BSNL and MTNL.

### **Impact of VRS on smooth functioning of BSNL**

1927. SHRI M.P. VEERENDRAKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has announced VRS in BSNL and MTNL and if so, the details thereof, including the reasons for the decision;
- (b) the number of people who have opted for VRS so far; and
- (c) whether there is an apprehension that it will badly affect the smooth functioning of BSNL especially the exchanges in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The Cabinet in its meeting held on 23.10.2019 approved the revival plan for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) which *inter-alia*, includes measures to reduce the staff cost by offering Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to the employees of age 50 years and above.

(b) As on 27.11.2019, 79101 employees of BSNL and 14050 employees of MTNL have applied for voluntary retirement under the scheme. However, the scheme is open till 03.12.2019 and the actual number will be known thereafter.

(c) BSNL has reported that it is making all necessary arrangements to ensure smooth functioning of BSNL including the exchanges in rural areas.

### **Enhancing efficiency of Speed Post services of India Post**

1928. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the efficiency of most of the private courier agencies in the country are considered better than the Speed Post services of India Post;

(b) if so, what are the major factors due to which private courier agencies have better efficiency and whether India Post would introduce similar system for Speed Post services by gearing up India Post employee; and

(c) whether Government has any plan to improve Speed Post services at par with private courier agencies?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Based on the test check done by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) of India in the year 2015 across the country, Speed Post service has been adjudged faster and more reliable than private couriers at the local level, in major cities and at tehsil level. Moreover, the traffic and revenue of Speed Post have been increasing over the years indicating the trust of the customers in the service. There has been more than 34% growth of Speed Post traffic from Financial Year 2014-15 to 2018-19. The performance of Speed Post is monitored through a performance dashboard under which various Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are regularly evaluated. Funds for site preparation and infrastructure upgrade of the processing hubs are allotted every year to ensure smooth working in the Speed Post hubs. Direct available flights are being used from one Speed Post processing hub to another to ensure expedited transmission and delivery of Speed Post. Further Nodal Mechanized Delivery Centres (NDCs) have been operationalised for mechanized delivery of Speed Post parcels. Department has also setup semi-automated parcel centres enabling mechanized sorting of parcels (including Speed Post parcels).

#### **Waiver of interest/penalty on AGR**

1929. SHRI VIVEK K. TANKHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for waiver or lowering of interest, penalty and interest on penalty on unpaid statutory dues of Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea based on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR); and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) No Sir.