

for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) 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. Accordingly, BSNL has launched 'BSNL Voluntary Retirement Scheme-2019' on 04.11.2019 which is open till 03.12.2019. Since the scheme is voluntary, the exact number of employees opting for voluntary retirement cannot be ascertained till closure of the scheme.

(c) and (d) In view of its poor financial position, BSNL has decided to implement various austerity measures which include reducing expenditure for different outsourcing works.

Bailout plan for BSNL and MTNL

489. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is contemplating a bailout plan for BSNL/ MTNL;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the package includes VRS for employees?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) The Cabinet in its meeting held on 23.10.2019 has approved the revival plan for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) which *inter alia*, includes measures to reduce staff cost through a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for employees of age 50 years and above, administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services, debt restructuring by raising of sovereign guarantee bonds, monetisation of assets and in-principle approval for merger of BSNL and MTNL.

Shift of consumers from BSNL to private companies

†490. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that consumers are moving towards private companies for services after getting fed up on account of poor services rendered by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL);
- (b) if so, whether Government is trying to address these shortcomings so that trust of consumers could be restored; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.