

(c) how many employees working as permanent as well as contractual staff have committed suicide till date, if so, the reasons for such incidents; and

(d) how many months salary is pending to be disbursed for different section of workers and by when it is expected to be transferred?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) The Cabinet in its meeting held on 23.10.2019 approved the revival plan 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, administrative allotment of spectrum to BSNL for providing 4G services, monetisation of assets of BSNL, debt restructuring by raising of sovereign guarantee bonds and in-principle approval for merger of BSNL and MTNL.

(b) As on 23.11.2019, around 78,000 employees of BSNL have opted for VRS. However, the scheme is open till 03.12.2019 and the actual number will be known thereafter.

(c) BSNL has informed that it does not employ contractual staff. Contract workers are engaged by contractors for specific outsourced work. No incident of suicide by BSNL staff is reported. However, one security guard at Kharagpur, West Bengal circle and one contract worker at Malappuram, Kerala circle have reportedly committed suicide due to unknown reasons. The matter is under investigation by respective State authorities.

(d) BSNL has reported that salary to its regular employees for the month of October 2019 is to be disbursed. The responsibility of payment to the contract workers essentially lies with the Contractor. However, due to severe financial constraints, delay in payment to contractors by BSNL has occurred in recent months. All efforts are being made by BSNL to overcome the situation including payment of bills of contractors for making payment of wages/arrears to contract workers.

Privatisation of BSNL/MTNL

1134. DR. SANTANU SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to sell/privatise BSNL and MTNL in the next five years from now;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government would assure that it will not sell BSNL and MTNL in the near future; and

- (d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) to (d) At present, no proposal to sell/privatise Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) is under consideration.

Decreasing trend in Postal Savings Scheme

1135. SHRI A. VIJAYAKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a decreasing trend is shown in Postal Savings Scheme in recent years;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted to increase the savings account;

(c) if so, whether low interest rate and tax on maturity are major causes for the common public for not showing interest to join Postal Savings Scheme; and

(d) if so, the corrective steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) No, Sir. The money deposited/invested in Post Office Savings Schemes during the last three financial years is as under:

| Sl. No. | Financial Year | Amount Deposited/Invested (In crores) |
|---------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | 2016-2017 | 4,26,849.53 |
| 2. | 2017-2018 | 4,90,076.70 |
| 3. | 2018-2019 | 5,53,211.58 |

(b) to (d) In view of the above, the question does not arise.

Unsatisfactory mobile services in Konkan region

†1136. SHRI NARAYAN RANE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that telephone and mobile services of BSNL are not working satisfactorily in districts of Konkan region of Maharashtra due to which consumers are facing inconvenience;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.