

Increase in charges of SMSs and data services

1624. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the telecom sector is under financial stress forcing the tele companies to increase charges for mobile SMSs and data services;
- (b) whether Government is considering any proposal of telecom companies and petroleum sector for negotiations on deferred payments of AGR dues; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) The telecom companies and Cellular Operator Association of India (COAI) have written to the Government about the financial stress being faced by the telecom companies. The Government has no data of the basis on which the telecom companies have increased the charges for mobile SMSs and data services.

- (b) and (c) No such proposal from telecom companies is under consideration.

Action taken to meet the demands of persons opting for VRS

1625. SHRI A. VIJAYA KUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of persons who took VRS from BSNL and MTNL till date;
- (b) whether many of the demands of those opting for VRS are not being met; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and action taken to meet their demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. (MTNL) offered Voluntary Retirement Scheme to their employees of age 50 years and above. Under the VRS offered by BSNL and MTNL, 78,569 employees of BSNL and 14,387 employees of MTNL have taken voluntary retirement.

- (b) and (c) BSNL and MTNL informed that no demand of VRS optees is pending for consideration.