

(c) to (e) The defence services have been requested to release this spectrum for growth of public mobile telecom services by shifting some of their wireless links between fixed locations, to alternate media like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC). The spectrum so released by the Defence services would be allotted for growth of mobile services, to the new as well as existing mobile service providers appropriately.

Low teledensity in India

1243. SHRI VIRENDRA BHATIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that teledensity in India is less than twenty per cent whereas in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and China it is much higher than our teledensity;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to increase the number of telecom operators;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the details of difficulties in raising the number of operators; and

(e) by when these difficulties would be remedied?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The overall teledensity of India is around 20.40% as on 31.07.2007 (latest available). As per International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ICT statistics report (as on December-2006) the teledensity in some Asian countries is given below:

Pakistan	25.32%
Bangladesh	14.03%
Sri Lanka	34.89%
Maldives	98.76%
China	62.62%

(b) to (e) Government has been granting Unified Access Services Licenses to the companies for providing telecom services on first cum first serve basis. Recently, Government has sought TRAI's recommendation on the number of Access Services Providers in each service area and review of certain terms and conditions in the Access Services Provider license. Increase in number of service providers for wireless and wireline access telecom services has significantly increased the demand on the limited spectrum resource for wireless access. Till date, TRAI has not submitted its recommendation.

Publicizing of Indian heritage

1244. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that postage stamps can play a vital role in publicizing Indian heritage throughout the world through philately;