

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1947
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05th AUGUST, 2021**

REVIVAL OF BSNL AND MTNL

1947 Shri Sanjay Raut:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any plan to revive state owned telecom operators BSNL and MTNL and also bailing out ailing private operators which are facing financial crisis;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is considering to make new policy to encourage more players to run mobile business to provide more secure and affordable mobile services to the consumers in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) to (d) The Government approved the revival plan for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) on 23.10.2019.

To ameliorate the stress in the telecom sector, following key enabling steps have been taken by the Government in the recent past:

- (i) Option has been given to telecom service providers (TSPs) for deferment of spectrum auction payment instalments for two years i.e., 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- (ii) Option has been given to TSPs for higher number of instalments (maximum 16 instalments) for deferred payment liabilities of spectrum acquired through auction(s).
- (iii) For facilitating proliferation of telecom networks, Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2016 have been framed and notified to make the process of obtaining RoW permissions time bound and transparent.

(iv) In all telecom services including Infrastructure Providers, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 100% is allowed with 49% under automatic route and beyond 49% through the Government's approval.

Further, in respect of payment of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) related dues which were under litigation, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has, vide order dated 01.09.2020, permitted the respective telecom operators to make the payment of 10% of the total dues, as demanded by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) by 31.03.2021, and to make payment in yearly instalments commencing from 01.04.2021 up to 31.03.2031 payable by 31st March of every succeeding financial year.

The Government has placed a cap on total spectrum holding of a service provider in a Licensed Service Area to a maximum of 35% of the total available spectrum. This cap has also been placed on the resultant entity post-merger through Merger and Acquisition Guidelines, 2014. Thereby, spectrum assets cannot be monopolised by a service provider even through merger and acquisition.

Various initiatives to protect the interests of consumers and service providers have helped in the expansion of telecom network in the country and deployment of new mobile technologies. At present, nearly 98% of the Indian population is covered with 4G mobile network. The number of telecom base stations in the country has grown from 7,94,422 (June, 2014) to 22,60,417 (June, 2021) and the average price for 1 GB mobile data has declined from Rs. 268.97 (year 2014) to Rs. 11.01 (year 2020).
