

Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya (except Shillong), Assam (except Guwahati) in the N.E. Region were not having Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in the beginning of this year. Cellular Mobile Telephone Service was being provided in Guwahati and Shillong by a private Service Provider (M/s. Reliance Telecom Limited), During the year, BSNL has so far launched its Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in the State Capitals of Nagaland and Manipur. Presently, BSNL and M/s. Reliance Telecom Limited are providing Mobile Telephone Service in N.E. Region. Another Cellular Operator M/s. Hexacom India Limited has also been granted licence to operate Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in North East Telecom circle Service Area. However, they have not started their service as yet. As per the Licence Agreement, in Telecom Circles, atleast 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQs) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the District Headquarters will be covered within three years of effective date of Licence. The licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the District Headquarters. There is no requirement of the mandatory coverage of the entire service area with the service. The choice of District Headquarters/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on their business decision.

(c) BSNL has plans to provide Mobile Service in all District Headquarters of N.E. Region in the current financial year.

Mobile phone services in Jammu and Kashmir

t963. DR. AKHTAR HASAN RIZVI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have launched mobile phone services in Jammu and Kashmir;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of mobile connections issued, so far; and
- (d) whether non-governmental companies are also providing mobile phone connections in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Sir, the Government is not directly in the business of providing any telecom Service. However, the Government Companies, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), provide Telecom Services in the country. BSNL has launched the Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in Jammu and Kashmir on 20.08.2003 covering the cities of Jammu, Srinagar and Katra (Temple town of Vaishno Devi).

(c) The number of Cellular Mobile Telephone connections as on 30.11.2003 in Jammu and Kashmir is 2307.

(d) No, Sir.

Fixation of Tariff for Landline Services

964. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have given a free hand to the landline telephone operators to fix tariff for their services; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per section 11(2) of TRAI Act 1997, the power to fix telecom tariffs has been mandated to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) only and Government has no role in the matter. However, the TRAI *vide* 28th Amendment to the Telecommunication Tariff Order, notified on 05.11.2003, has forborne on prescription of tariff for basic service (other than ISDN), except for rural fixed line service, including WLL (Fixed). For rural fixed line subscribers, the TRAI has prescribed a Standard Tariff Package, within which service providers are permitted to offer alternatives.

Penalties for not fulfilling rural commitments

965. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to levy access deficit charges and other penalties on the private service providers who are not fulfilling rural commitments;