

- (iii) have a control over the content, they wish to view.
 - (iv) It has been made obligatory for cable operators to make provisions for rent, security deposit, repair and maintenance of Set Top Boxes (STB).
 - (v) Some MSOs/Cable Operators have come out with consumer-friendly schemes through which the STBs will be made available to consumers.
 - (vi) Government has reduced the duty on import of STB and its components to make them more affordable.
- (d) The main objectives behind the introduction of CAS are:—
- (i) To save the consumers for arbitrary and exorbitant hikes in subscription rates;
 - (ii) To enable the consumers to choose pay for only those pay channels which they wish to watch.
 - (iii) To bring in transparency in the figures of subscriber base and thereby improve revenue collections.

24-Hour DD news channel

818. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that inspite of the new 24-hour news channels DD could not improve its overall coverage in getting 'breaking' news;
- (b) whether Government thought of improving on these lines;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati have informed that the 24 hours news channel is yet to be launched. However, Doordarshan is covering breaking news story in its news bulletins and by scrolling whenever necessary.

Prasar Bharati has informed that steps taken by Doordarshan to improve news coverage include round the clock operationalisation of

news room in Delhi, introduction of running scroll during news bulletins, increasing number of news bulletins by Regional News Units, etc.

Upgradation of AIR and DD Network in NER

819. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the special package for upgradation of AIR and DD network in the NER indicating the outlay, item-wise and year-wise, the amount actually utilized and the achievements made during the Ninth Plan and proposed during the remaining period of the Tenth Plan;

(b) the implementation status of the declaration made to create a separate administrative zone for NER; and

(c) the present status and target set for enhancement of the height of TV transmission tower at Dibrugarh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The Special package for expansion and improvement of AIR and Doordarshan services in North East Region and Island territories was approved in principle by the Government in October, 2001. The details of the schemes approved by the EFC are given in the enclosed Statement. (*See below*) Provisions of Rs. 170.55 crores and Rs. 380.55 crores have been kept for AIR and Doordarshan respectively in the 10th Plan for the schemes to be implemented under Phase-II of the Special North East Package, which is yet to be approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC).

(b) A separate North East Zone was created by setting up a small office with limited staff in a rented building in Guwahati. A Chief Engineer has also been posted in Guwahati. Budget has been provided for the establishment of North East Zonal Office.

(c) The work for enhancement of height of RCC-cum-steel tower at Dibrugarh had been tendered with wide publicity, but no response was received. The feasibility of increasing the tower height in all steel frame has been examined in consultation with IIT, Cheenai, which has confirmed the alternative proposal and finalized the design. The work will be re-tendered. It would take about two years for the work to be completed, after its award.