

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the criteria laid down for such identification;

(c) whether information furnished by the card holders at the time of recent renewal process will also be taken into consideration to identify the Population below Poverty line:

(d) if so, details thereof;

(e) if not, reasons therefor;

(f) whether any time bound programme is proposed to be undertaken in this regard;

(g) if so, details thereof; and

(h) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (h). The Government proposes to restructure Public Distribution System with focus on the poor. This proposal has been welcomed by the States. The proposal calls for identification of persons below the poverty line and the State Governments have been impressed upon the need to do it as and when the scheme is finalised and formal orders issued for implementation.

Air Service to District Headquarters

3366. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI:
SHRI GIRDHARI YADAV:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governments of West Bengal and Bihar have approached the Union Government for starting flights for connecting the State capitals with the District Headquarters by airways;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon;

(c) whether other State Governments have also approached the Union Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (e). No specific proposal has been received by the Government of India to airlink all the district headquarters. However, to ensure that air transport services grow in a balanced manner throughout the country, route dispersal guidelines have been issued requiring operators of

trunk routes to provide defined minimum capacity in the North East, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshwadeep Islands. Regional airlines are being encouraged to airlink far flung and hitherto unconnected districts and towns.

Promotion of Cultural Tourism

3367. SHRI K.V. SURENDRA NATH : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to promote the cultural tourism by getting the services of some institutions in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Promotion of cultural tourism is one of the major objectives of the Department of Tourism. The various State/ Union Territory Governments are extended financial assistance to organise fairs and festivals directly and also be obtaining the services of various cultural organisations/ Institutions.

Cellular Phone Service

3368. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the DOT has fixed any maximum and minimum charges for cellular phone services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the rates currently charged by each of the cellular phone service companies;

(d) whether the cellular phone service companies have announced a drastic reduction in the rates;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The Govt. has fixed a ceiling tariff for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service. The Cellular operators can not charge above the ceiling tariff. No minimum charge have been fixed for Cellular Mobile Telephone Services.

(b) The Ceiling tariffs are given in the *Statement* enclosed.

(c) The information regarding current rates being charged by each of the 8 cellular operators in 4 Metro cities, is being collected.

(d) to (f). Reports have appeared in the newspapers regarding an announcement in reduction of the Cellular Mobile Telephone Service rates by one company which has been licensed to operate the Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in three Territorial Telecom Circles. The details of the reported announcement are being sought from the company.

STATEMENT

Ceiling Tariffs for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service:

1. Monthly Rental for the Service Rs. 156/-per month
2. Security Deposit Rs. 3000/-
3. Installation Charges Rs. 1200/-
4. *Call Charges :*
- 4.1 *For calls originated by the Mobile Subscriber :* Air time charge @ 10 seconds per unit call plus call charges as applicable for the fixed network for Local, STD and ISD calls. For mobile to mobile calls within the same Cellular Service area, only air time charges will be levied.
- 4.2 *For calls terminating on the Mobile Subscriber :* Air time charge @ 10 seconds per unit call will be levied. No charge will be levied to the mobile subscriber if the mobile subscriber terminates an incoming call within 5 seconds.
5. *Notes on tariff :*
- 5.1 Call duration will be on air time basis for mobile subscribers.
- 5.2 The air time unit call shall be charged at unit rate applicable to the highest slab of the DOT's fixed network (Rs. 1.40 per unit at present). The unit rate shall be applied as above for all calls and there are no telescopic rates.
- 5.3 Call charges for the air time during peak hours shall be fixed at rates not exceeding double the rates prescribed in para 4 above. Peak hours shall be restricted upto a maximum of 4 hours per day. Peak hours and air time call charges during peak hours may be fixed by the Licensee in consultation with Telecom Authority.
- 5.4 Call charges for the air time during Sundays and 3 National holidays (15th August, 26 January & 2nd October) shall be half the rates prescribed in para 4 above.
- 5.5 For calls from mobile subscriber to the fixed net work, the Licensee shall charge the mobile subscriber at the

rates prescribed by the Telecom Authority according to time and day of the call. Unit rate for such calls shall be the highest slab rate of the DOT's fixed network (Rs. 1.40 at present). The unit rate shall be applied as above for all calls and there are no Telescopic rates.

- 5.6 There are no free calls to be given in the air time.
- 5.7 For calls originating from the fixed network to mobile, the mobile subscriber will be charged for the air time and DOT will not have to pay any access fee to the Cellular Operator. The air time charges will be collected by the Cellular Operator.
- 5.8 For mobile to mobile both caller and called party will be charged.
6. All tariff increase shall be subject to prior approval of the Telecom Authority and/or its successor.
7. The rental does not include the cost of the Subscriber's terminal equipment (mobile handset). The subscriber is free to buy the terminal equipment from any source.

Cases against Chairman, VSNL

3369. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number and details of cases filed in the Court of Law by the SC/ST Employees Association and SC/ST employees of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and their wards against the Chairman, VSNL under SCs/STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 during the last three years;

(b) the circumstances which compelled them to file such cases to seek justice through court of law; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by the Government against the Chairman, VSNL in view of the ongoing court cases and large scale harassment to SC/ST employees by the Chairman after filing such cases?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) There are no cases filed by SC/ST Employees Association and SC/ST employees of VSNL and their wards against the Chairman, VSNL under SCs/STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 during the last three years.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

Vacant Posts

3370. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: