

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:345
ANSWERED ON:05.02.2004
REGULATOR FOR CABLE BUSINESS
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA;M.V.V.S MURTHI

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has appointed, TRAI to act as regulator for cable business;
- (b) whether the Ministry is also planning for a separate regulator/regulation;
- (c) if so, the terms and conditions laid down for such regulator;
- (d) the details about the order issued by TRAI freezing the cable prices as per December, 2003 schedule;
- (e) the action Government has taken to see that the customers are not compelled to pay higher price; and
- (f) the extent to which the cable customers will be protected in Mumbai, Delhi and other cities?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 345 FOR ANSWER ON 5.2.2004

(a): The Central Government has issued a Notification on 9th January, 2004, notifying the `broadcasting services and cable services` to be `Telecommunication Services` under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997. The functions of the Authority are laid down in the said Act. The TRAI has been entrusted with the additional functions of making recommendations regarding the terms and conditions on which the addressable systems, such as STBs, shall be provided to customers and the parameters for regulating the maximum time for advertisements in pay as well as other channels. It will also specify standard norms for, and periodicity of, revision of rates of pay channels, including interim measures.

(b) & (c): A proposal for setting up Broadcasting Content Regulatory Authority is under consideration.

(d) to (f): The TRAI has, through its order issued on 15.1.2004, fixed the ceiling on charges payable by the cable subscribers to cable operators; by cable operators to Multi-system operators (MSOs) /Broadcasters; and by MSOs to Broadcasters (including their authorised distribution agencies) to be those prevalent as on 26th December, 2003 in respect of both free-to-air and pay channels (both for CAS and non-CAS areas) until final determination by it on various issues concerning these charges. In case of any violations of TRAI's order/directive/regulation, a complaint can be filed by the TRAI before the appropriate courts under section 29 and 30, read with section 34 of the TRAI Act. Consumers are also at liberty to move the appropriate consumer forum for seeking redressal of their grievances. Hence, the consumers will be protected against arbitrary hikes in monthly subscription charges till the various issues involved are finally determined by it.