

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2337
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2010
CONGESTION IN MOBILE NETWORK
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has expressed concerns in its report over the increasing congestion connectivity among private telecommunication companies including Bharati, Reliance and the Public Sector Companies, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL);
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of congestion level of the networks of private sector telecommunication companies and Public Sector Telecom Companies as compared to the norms in urban and rural areas during the last three years and the current year; and
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) to (d) Madam, in order to ensure seamless interconnection, TRAI has been monitoring the level of congestion at the Point of Interconnection (POI) between various service providers, against the benchmark of <0.5% prescribed by TRAI for this parameter, on monthly basis. The details of the number of Poles having congestion during the period January 2007 to March 2010 is given in the Annexure-I.

TRAI expressed concerns over the level of congestion between the networks of service providers through the various Press Releases issued from time to time. TRAI had issued show cause notices to six service providers in whose network the number of Poles with congestion increased during the period October to December 2005. Some of the service providers and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) had challenged these show cause notices before Telecom Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal and Hon'ble Tribunal vide judgment dated 25.2.2010 had directed the petitioners to file reply to the show cause notices to TRAI and also directed TRAI to take appropriate decisions thereon.

TRAI has taken the following steps for addressing interconnection issues which is directly related to congestion at the Points of Interconnection (POIs) due to which the inter-network communication is affected.

- a. TRAI issued the Interconnection (Reference Interconnection Offer) Regulation, 2002 which specified well defined terms for interconnection to be offered by service providers with significant market power to other operators.
- b. TRAI vide its Direction dated 22.7.2003 directed all service providers that direct connectivity should be made between all service providers within 3 months.
- c. TRAI has also issued a directive dated 31.12.2003 on non disconnection of POIs without informing the interconnecting party and TRAI.
- d. TRAI has issued a direction on 7th June 2005 to all service providers "to provide Interconnection on the request of the Interconnection seeker within 90 days of the applicable payment made by the Interconnection seeker".

All these Regulation/ Directions have been challenged in TDSAT and the court has set aside the first three (a, b and c) above. The Court has also ruled that the power of TRAI to fix the terms and conditions of interconnection are subject to the license conditions and the existing interconnection agreements between the operators. TRAI has appealed in Supreme Court of India against the decision of TDSAT in these cases. All these cases are presently subjudice.