

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3305

ANSWERED ON:30.11.2010

NEWS ON PRIVATE FM RADIO

Bapurao Shri Khatgaonkar Patil Bhaskarrao;Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo

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

- (a) whether the Government has not permitted to broadcast news and current affairs through private FM radio service;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended to allow broadcast of news and current affairs on private FM radio;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has approved/cleared the recommendations made by the TRAI;
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the recommendation is likely to be implemented; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING (SHRI C. M. JATUA)

(a) & (b) : Yes, Sir. No news and current affairs programmes have been permitted under the existing (Phase-II) policy guidelines due to sensitivity of such broadcast and absence of an effective monitoring mechanism.

(c) to (f) : Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had inter-alia recommended that FM Radio broadcasters may be permitted to broadcast news taking content from AIR, Doordarshan (DD), authorized TV news channels, United News of India (UNI), Press Trust of India (PTI) and any other authorized news agency without any substantive change in the content . No other source of news is permitted at present.

However, the Ministry is of the view that in the absence of a regulatory authority with a localized presence and any arrangement for monitoring the private channels and the sensitivities involved, it is not possible to allow complete freedom to broadcast news, even though the content may be sourced from authorized agencies as suggested. What is material is the way of presentation. The same event can be sensationalized or put in a sober manner taking care of the sentiments and sensitivities involved. Accordingly the Ministry is considering allowing the carriage of news bulletins of AIR in exactly same format (unaltered) on such terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed with Prasar Bharati.

A Group of Ministers has been constituted on 30.09.2010 to examine and recommend as to whether e-auction or closed tender process is appropriate for licensing methodology in case of FM Phase-III. Policy guidelines for FM radio broadcasting through private agencies in Phase-III will be finalized after the recommendations of the GoM are received.