

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3015
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2011
FM RADIO SERVICES
Dhurve Jyoti;Patel Shri Devji

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

- (a) whether the Government has laid down flexible rules/guidelines for operation of Private FM radio channels in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the districts/areas in the country which have not been covered by the FM radio stations/services along with the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the time by which all the areas of the country are likely to be covered under the FM radio services?

Answer

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

(a & b) Cabinet, in its meeting held on 7.7.2011, has approved the "Policy Guidelines on Expansion of FM radio broadcasting services through private agencies (Phase-III)". Under the Policy, permission for FM radio channels will be awarded through ascending e-auction, as followed by Department of Telecommunication for the auction of 3G and BWA spectrum, mutatis-mutandis, as recommended by the GoM on Licensing Methodology for FM Phase-III.

Briefly, the guidelines include an increase in the present foreign investment limits from 20% to 26%. Carriage of News Bulletins produced by All India Radio has been allowed in an unaltered form. Specific incentives have been given in the Policy with regard to J&K, North Eastern States and Island territories to make the operations viable in these areas. These steps in the new Policy will provide greater operational flexibility, bring down operational costs and improve viability in general. The detailed policy guidelines are available on this Ministry's website (www.mib.nic.in)

(c) Phase-III Policy extends FM radio services to about 227 new cities, in addition to the present 86 cities, with a total of 839 new private FM radio Channels in 294 cities. Phase-III policy will result in coverage of all cities with a population of one lakh and above except private FM radio channels in North East (NE) Region and Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Island territories, which are having a population of less than 1 lakh.

At present, AIR FM service of All India Radio (AIR) is being provided from 203 transmitters across the country, covering 25.6% area and 37.33% population of the country by FM broadcasting service. In addition to this, 18 FM transmitters setup in 10th Plan scheme are under process of commissioning.

During 11th plan, FM Transmitters of various capacities are being setup at 277 additional places. After implementation of the 11th five year Plan's schemes, AIR coverage in FM mode would be increased to 38.75% by area and 53.53% by population of the country.

Out of total districts in the country, 247 districts are fully or partly getting the FM service of AIR. After implementation of 11th plan's schemes, 122 more districts will have fully/partly FM AIR coverage.

(d) For covering the entire country by FM channels of AIR, huge funds are required. Therefore, FM expansion in the country is being taken up in the phased manner depending upon availability of funds and inter-se priority.

So far as Private FM radio broadcasting is concerned, at present there is no proposal to cover all the areas of the country. Locations of the private FM radio stations have been chosen keeping in view the population of the cities, commercial viability and coverage by existing or proposed private FM radio stations.