

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4691

ANSWERED ON:22.04.2015

ONE NATION FREE ROAMING

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether `One Nation-Free Roaming` has been one of the objectives of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012 and the same was proposed to be implemented by October 2013;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons for not implementing free National roaming so far;
- (c) whether the Government has implemented or proposes to implement the `One Nation-Free Roaming` in some telecom circles by merging the circles;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the time by which the Government proposes to make the national roaming free across the country as being one of the main objective of NTP 2012?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (b) Yes, Madam, "One Nation – Free Roaming" is one of the objectives of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012. Being a predominantly tariff related issue, TRAI floated a consultation paper on 'Review of Tariff for National Roaming' on 25.02.2013. As per the comments received from the stakeholders, majority of the stakeholders were not in favour of Home Price Rule (HPR) in the national roaming service. Stakeholders were strongly averse to a regime in which incoming calls while on national roaming would become free.

After analyzing the comments received from the stakeholders, a view was taken by TRAI that fully free national roaming across all the tariff schemes is not practicable due to the following reasons:

Tariff regime of 'home equal to roam' for outgoing voice calls and SMS may result in cross subsidization of roaming subscribers at the expense of non-roaming subscribers, as a result of which the home tariff may increase.

Tariff regime of free incoming voice call while on national roaming may create serious distortions in the telecom market. Such a regime would create arbitrage opportunity that could lead to SIM movement behavior across the circles.

(c) to (e) The Government does not propose to implement the "One Nation-Free Roaming" in some telecom circles by merging the circles.

Through Telecommunication Tariff (55th Amendment) Order, 2013 dated 17.6.2013, TRAI brought about the following changes in the tariff regime for national roaming service:

reduced the ceiling tariffs for national roaming service,

permitted Special Tariff Vouchers (STVs) and Combo Vouchers for roaming tariffs to provide flexibility and convenience to the consumers and

mandated the wireless access service providers to offer special roaming tariff plans (RTP and RTP-FR) in which the subscribers can avail partially free roaming, or fully free roaming in lieu of payment of fixed charges, by subscribing to RTP and RTP-FR respectively.

Subsequently, through the Telecommunication Tariff (60th Amendment) Order, 2015 dated 09.04.2015, TRAI has made the following changes in the tariff regime for national roaming, which will come into effect from 01.05.2015.

reduced the ceilings tariff for voice calls and SMS while on national roaming. The table given below presents the reduction in tariff for national roaming service announced by TRAI:

Item	Ceiling tariff as	Ceiling tariff as	Percentage
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per TTO(55th Amendment), 2013 per TTO(60th Amendment), 2015 reduction

Outgoing local voice call Re.1.00 per minute Re.0.80 per minute 20%
Outgoing long distance
(inter-circle) voice call Re.1.50 per minute Re.1.15 per minute 23%
Incoming voice call Re.0.75 per minute Re.0.45 per minute 40%
Outgoing local SMS Rs.1.00 per SMS Rs.0.25 per SMS 75%
Outgoing long distance (inter circle) SMS Re.1.50 per SMS Re.0.38 per SMS 75%

#TRAI has removed the existing mandate to the TSPs for providing RTP/RTP-FR and has mandated the TSPs to offer a Special Roaming Tariff Plan to its pre-paid and post-paid subscribers. In Special Roaming Tariff Plan, incoming voice calls while on national roaming shall be free, on payment of fixed charge, if any.