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Title: Need to review the allocation of spectrum to the private GSM operators in Telecom Sector.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): Sir, it is regrettable that in a country where the Telecom Sector is witnessing a phenomenal growth in building world class infrastructure for the rapid growth of the country, a few private GSM operators under the umbrella of COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India), are trying to restrict the entry of new players in the GSM segment.

In order to achieve the targeted 500 million consumers by 2010, the Industry should be geared for competition with a technology neutral and transparent framework of optimal spectrum utilization.

In keeping with the world class trends in the Telecom Sector, the Regulator TRAI, had recommended far-reaching reforms in the Sector, which has been approved by the DoT and is in the initial stages of implementation.

However COAI, represented by 3 leading private GSM operators are trying to prevent the entry of new players in the GSM segment by cartelization and indulging in anti-consumer activities by increasing the tariffs. They are also trying to delay the implementation of the new initiatives by indulging in litigation to enhance their own dominance.

It is understood that these private GSM operators have been given scarce spectrum free of cost far in excess of their licence entitlement and actual requirement of 6.2 MHZ. These players in aggregate have hoarded over 50 MHz of spectrum across different circles and the Government should now demand the surrender of this excess spectrum or else ask them to make payment of an appropriate amount to the Government for hoarding the excess spectrum. The loss to the Government by the inefficient use of spectrum by these operators runs into thousands of crores of rupees.

In view of the above, I demand a comprehensive review of the excess spectrum allocated to them free of cost and also initiate an inquiry by a central investigating agency in order to ascertain as to how and in what manner they have obtained the additional spectrum.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Ram Swaroop Prasad – not present.