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Title: Need to review the decision to ban pre-paid mobile phone services in Jammu and Kashmir.

DR. MIRZA MEHBOOB BEG (ANANTNAG): Sir, through you, I want to draw the attention of the Government and the attention of the entire House to a very important issue confronting the people of Jammu and Kashmir. I hope Dr. Farooq Abdullah and other Ministers will attend to me.

We are the only State, perhaps, in the country where mobile services were launched last of all. That is one point. Very recently, here I want your intervention and I hope the Government and hon. Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah will take it up very seriously, we are the only State in the country where pre-paid mobile phones have been stopped altogether. There has been a blanket ban. No pre-paid mobile phones can be used in the State of Jammu and Kashmir now.

I want to tell you that 92 per cent of the mobile phone users used to use these pre-paid mobile phones in Jammu and Kashmir. Not only that, over 2,000 young men of the Jammu and Kashmir have been rendered jobless; they have no jobs now.

Not only that. The most important thing is that the majority of the security forces in the State of Jammu and Kashmir posted from different parts of the country were using pre-paid mobile phones and they have lost contacts with their homes. They no more can contact their own family members. The only source of contact they had with their families was this pre-paid mobile phones, and it has been stopped altogether. I want to draw your attention to this. It was done when the peace process has been initiated in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This gives a very negative signal. I am sure over a period of two decades now, when the Kashmir is on boil, a vested interest has developed in the abnormal Kashmir. The Government of India has to break this nexus and has to punish providers of those pre-paid mobile phones. The providers of those phones have not been punished but the users have been punished for no fault of theirs. There are post-paid mobile phones; there are pre-paid mobile phones; and there is no ban on post-paid mobile phones. This is nobody's point. We do not want to compromise insofar as the security of the State is concerned. This is nobody's argument or nobody's point. Hon. Home Minister is on record to have said that the worst kind of terrorism that the country is facing is from naxalites. But these pre-paid mobile phones are in use there. But unfortunately, the State of Jammu and Kashmir is the only State in the country where the use of pre-paid mobile phone has been stopped. I would like Government's intervention in this.

THE MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH): There is no doubt about it that people have been hurt by the ban of these pre-paid mobile phones. But, I am sure the Government of India is already aware of it. The Chief Minister of the State has taken this up with the Home Minister of India. I am sure, they are looking into this. All gamuts of these are being seen. As soon as everything is sorted out, I am sure the Government of India is very eager that none of them should be left out of what is possible in the rest of the country. But looking at everything, I am sure and I can assure the Member that we are already aware of it and we will take steps which are necessary to see that the people who are affected by this get some relief as soon as we are able to get over this whole tragedy of finding out where mistakes have been made in the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow the 15th December, 2009 at 11.00 a.m.

18.48 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock

on Tuesday, December 15, 2009/Agrahayana 24, 1931 (Saka).

* Not recorded

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

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