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Title: Need to take steps to roll back the hiked rates of prepaid services of mobile telephones by telecom operators.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Sir, I had moved an Adjournment Motion today, and you did not allow it. But you said that you would allow me to raise this issue during *Zero Hour*. Hence I am raising this urgent and important issue, now.

Sir, it has been published in all the newspapers that the private telecom players have hiked the rates of prepaid services of mobile telephones by 40 per cent.

This unreasonable and steep tariff hike of prepaid services by the private mobile operators in the country has caused concern and added an additional burden on the customers, who had been utilising competitive rates till now.

This tariff hike is a contravention to the guarantee and commitment made to the customers by these companies, and it has almost ended the era of free and unlimited calling, which was a feature the telecom operators boasted about.

Sir, three telecom companies, namely, Vodafone-Idea, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, who command the prepaid mobile services market, are clearly colluding to pass their inefficiencies and operating expenses on to the poor consumers. There is a cartel behind this, which is very unfortunate.

Sir, from time to time, we have been telling and it is our allegation that this Government is pro-corporates, pro-multinationals and pro-rich.

Sir, on the other hand, BSNL-MTNL is facing a severe financial crunch. The Government of India has not taken any step to revive the BSNL-MTNL. At the same time, this Government has always given permission to private telecom operators to hike the prices of mobile telephony. The Government has opened the door for them to do anything. This is against the interest of the common people of this country.

So, I would request the hon. Minister to take necessary steps so that this price hike is rolled back immediately. Thank you.