

[English]

Small and Medium Newspapers

*35. SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:

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

(a) the steps taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of Ram Mohan Rao Committee on the small and medium newspapers; and

(b) the measures taken by the Government to improve

the financial status of small newspapers in regional language?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO): (a) Out of 12 recommendations made by the Committee, 11 have been accepted with some minor modifications in some cases. Statement-I thereof is attached;

(b) Statement-II giving details of facilities which have some bearing on financial status of small newspapers including those in regional languages is attached.

Statement-I

No.	Conclusions & Recommendations	Report of implementation of Ram Mohan Rao Committee on Small and Medium Newspapers
1.	Small Newspapers may be extended a special concessional rate of 5 paise instead of the present uniform rate of 15 paise under Postal Tariff. The concession may be extended to all registered small newspapers (dailies and weeklies) on production of a certificate from RNI.	This recommendation could not be accepted because of the inability of the Department of Posts to accept an additional liability over and above the present losses being incurred by them.
2.	In Tele-communication Tariff, the concession similar to those in respect of ordinary TP circuits may be extended to Data/fascimile circuits as well. With the extended concession to Data/Fascimile, the news agencies can continue to extend their services to Small & Medium Newspapers, without any further increase in rates.	Accepted. The Department of Telecommunications have extended the concessions given to ordinary TP circuits to the Data/Fascimile circuits w.e.f. 1.1.1991.
3.	The State Government may be asked to set the bus schedules in such a manner as to facilitate the requirements of the Small & Medium Newspapers also.	Accepted. Most of the State Govts./Union Territories have informed that the Bus Schedules have been set to facilitate the requirement of Small & Medium newspapers.
4.	The facility of despatch of Newspapers under Monthly Account System of the Railways be given to Newspapers Agencies as and when such a request is made by them subject to fulfilment of necessary formalities.	Accepted. The facility of despatch of newspapers under the Monthly Accounts System of the Railways has been made available to Newspapers as and when such a request is made by them subject to fulfilment of necessary formalities.
5.	Since the declaration of Small and Medium newspapers as a small scale industry would not be feasible, some of the relevant concessions available to Small Scale Industries should be extended to Small and Medium newspapers.	Accepted. The Reserve Bank of India has reported that loans and advances granted to Small & Medium Newspapers which satisfy the investment criteria laid down for small Scale Industrial units are considered as priority sector advances and such units are eligible for concessions in the rates of interest, margin etc. as are normally available to other Small Scale Industries.
6.	The availability of loans for second-hand equipment and machinery for printing presses from the Nationalised Banks on the concessional terms as is now available to the new printing presses, be considered.	Accepted. Banks have been allowed to grant terms loans to borrowers against second hand machinery if such machinery is imported from abroad.
7.	The existing ceiling of Rs. 35 lakhs may be increased to Rs. 60 lakhs so that small and medium newspapers could meet their requirement of modernisation. The ceiling may be raised as and when the Government raises the ceiling of the SSI Units.	Accepted. The ceiling has been increased to Rs. 60 lakhs w.e.f. 2.4.1991.
8.	State Government may be requested to consider allotment of suitable accommodation on a priority basis to Small and Medium Newspapers.	Accepted. Most of the State Governments have responded stating that whatever is possible will be done.

No.	Conclusions & Recommendations	Report of Implementation of Ram Mohan Rao Committee on small and medium newspapers
9.	UNI & PTI should consider extending their service at concessional rates to help Small & Medium Newspapers to supplement their modernisation efforts.	Accepted. The News Agencies have agreed to continue their services to small and medium newspapers at concessional rates.
10.	The State Government may amend the accreditation rules to enable the Editors of Small newspapers at the District Headquarters level to get accreditation.	Accepted. The State Government have been requested to implement this recommendation.
11.	To maintain status-quo regarding slow speed bulletin in regional languages by AIR.	Accepted. Status-quo in this regard is being maintained.
12.	Publication of a Compendium: The Committee took note of the fact that various Government agencies are providing a number of facilities/concessions to the small and medium newspapers. Many newspapers to these categories are not aware of these facilities. The Committee suggests that Ministry of I & B may bring out periodically a Compendium of the concessions/facilities extended to the small and medium newspapers so that even newspapers published from the remotest corner of the country are aware of the concession/facilities available to them.	Accepted. State Governments/Union Territories have been asked on 16.9.'92, 31.12.'92, 11.3.'93, 31.1.'94 & 21.11.'94 to make available the required information. Only four States/UTs have responded so far.

Statement II

Facilities Extended to Small Newspapers

(i) Newspapers whose annual entitlement of standard newsprint is below 200 MT can import their entire requirement of newsprint. The imported newsprint is cheaper compared to indigenous newsprint.

(ii) A newspaper with a minimum paid circulation of 2000 copies is eligible for empanelment with DAVP for Government advertisements.

(iii) Papers/periodicals published in backward, remote, tribal areas or in tribal languages and meant primarily for tribal readers are made eligible for securing Government advertisement if their minimum paid circulation is 500 copies.

(iv) Small Newspapers/periodicals with an uninterrupted publication of four months now become eligible for securing Government advertisements as against the period of six months provided earlier.

(v) The standard print area (cm) required for eligibility has also been lowered in case of small & medium newspapers from 76 SC cm to 480 SC cm, for weeklies, fortnightlies and from 1280 SCcm to 960 SCcm for Monthlies and other publications.

(vi) Newspapers/periodicals with a circulation of upto 2000 copies have been exempted from submission of Chartered Accountant certificate.

(vii) In the matter of advertisement rates of DAVP, rate structure provides an inbuilt weightage for Small & Medium papers.

(viii) Besides making available its general services such as news releases and features, Press Information Bureau supplies other types of news service such as

ebonoid blocks, charbas (for Urdu papers only) and illustrated photo features to small newspapers.

Gas From Bangladesh

*36. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:
PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:—

(a) whether the Government of Bangladesh has shown interest in supply of gas with buyback arrangement of power from West Bengal;

(b) if so, the efforts made by the Government to get gas from Bangladesh on commercial terms;

(c) whether any cost analysis has been made by the Government on supply of gas from Bangladesh vis-a-vis Oman;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The question of import of gas from Bangladesh has been taken up with the Government of Bangladesh at different levels. No positive response has been received from the Bangladesh Government.