

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:66  
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2003  
IMPLEMENTATION OF CONDITIONAL ACCESS SYSTEM (CAS)  
NAWAL KISHORE RAI;VILAS BABURAO MUTTEMWAR

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

- (a) whether the implementation of the Conditional Access System (CAS) has been deferred till September 1, 2003;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the details of pay channel rates, if declared alongwith the number of free channels to be made available to the consumers and the cost thereof;
- (d) the details regarding the import of Set Top Box alongwith the number of STBs to be imported from other countries and the cost at which these STBs to be made available to the consumers;
- (e) details of programme, if any, for the manufacture of these STBs indigenously; and
- (f) the other steps taken/likely to be taken by the Government and the progress made for smooth functioning of the CAS and to resolve the issue of STBs?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.66 OR ANSWER ON 24TH JULY, 2003.

(a) and (b): After monitoring the preparedness of the stakeholders and after consultations with the broadcasters, multi-system operators, cable operators, consumer groups, etc. it has been decided to roll out the conditional access system (CAS) in a phased zone-wise manner in the three metros of Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai and at one go in Chennai with effect from 1st Sept. 2003. A notification to this effect has been issued on 10th July, 2003. The intervening period will be utilised to step up preparedness for smooth roll out of the C.A.S. and educating the subscribers.

(c) Government has specified Rs.72/- (plus taxes) as the maximum price for the package of channels in the basic service tier (free-to-air channels), consisting of not less than thirty such channels of different genres of entertainment, news, sports, children's programmes and music. Free-to-air channels, over and above thirty, would also be made available to subscribers within the said maximum amount. The details of pay channels and the rates, as indicated by broadcasters, are contained in Annexure. The rates are subject to revision in future because stakeholders are yet working out internal arrangements.

(d) Government is not importing any set top boxes (STBs). As per the data furnished by the Customs and Central Excise authorities, 50,050 STBs. have been imported by various multi-system operators/cable operators, as on 16th July, 2003. According to data given by Multi-System Operators (MSOs.), orders for large volumes of STBs. have been placed and these are expected to arrive in a phased manner in the next few months. The cost of the box ranges between Rs.2,500 and Rs.3,000/-. The MSOs. and the cable operators, etc. have come out with different schemes for making the STBs., available to the subscribers i.e., through instalments/hire-purchase/outright purchase, loan schemes, etc. or on a refundable deposit plus nominal daily rental charges.

(e) and (f) The indigenous manufacturing industry is yet to gear up fully since the technology deployed is quite new. With the incentive of waiver of central excise duty by the Central Board of Excise and Customs in the Ministry of Finance vide their notification of 24th June, 2003 and the reduction of duties on components, indigenous production is expected to pick up. Government is closely and continuously monitoring the arrivals of STBs. Visits are made to head-ends to assess the level of preparedness and test check of boxes has also commenced to ensure that the boxes conform to the standards published by the Bureau of Indian Standards.