

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:308
ANSWERED ON:03.12.2003
CELLULAR PHONE SERVICE IN N.E. STATES
VINAY KUMAR SORAKE

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether lack of communication facilities is a major drag on the developmental aspects of the North-Eastern States;
- (b) the reasons for the delay in providing cellular phone services to the North-Eastern States by the licence holders;
- (c) whether the present licence holders for North-East for mobile(Cellular) service are indulging in restrictive trade practices by not expanding the capacity of their network and selectively seeking high-end customers for existing cellular services in Guwahati and Shillong;
- (d) if so, the fact thereof;
- (e) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has any plans to provide cellular connectivity to North-Eastern States; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SRI P. V. VASHTOK PRADHAN)

(a) No, Sir. Communications facilities are in existence in North Eastern States. The telecom infrastructure provided by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited upto October, 2003 to provide communications facilities are as follows:

- (i) Direct Exchange Lines 8.45 lakhs
- (ii) Optical Fibre Cable laid 6333 Route Kilometers
- (iii) Microwave Systems 9115 Route Kilometers.
- (iv) No. of Village Panchayat Telephones 24051

In addition, Cellular Mobile Telephone Service has also been launched by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited starting from Kohima on 27.10.2003.

(b) Prior to August, 2002 there was a ban on fresh start or expansion of Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in North Eastern States due to security considerations. Subsequently, the Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) Operators have planned to expand their network for provision of the service in the North Eastern States.

(c) No, Sir. The present licence holders for North East Telecom Circle for mobile (cellular) service couldnot expand their services earlier on account of the said ban.

(d) Does arise not applicable in view of (c) above.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has planned to provide cellular connectivity in North Eastern States. The details of Cellular Mobile Telephone capacity planned in each State of North Eastern Region is as below:

S. No. State Capacity (Lines)

1. Arunachal Pradesh 14,300

2. Assam 42,550

3. Manipur 8,300

4. Meghalaya 7,300

5. Mizoram 8,300

6. Nagaland 8,300

7 Tripura 6,300