

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:409

ANSWERED ON:24.11.2005

CONFERENCE OF INFORMATION MINISTERS OF STATES

Kaushal Shri Raghuvir Singh;Meghwal Shri Kailash

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

- (a) whether a Conference of Information Ministers of States (SIMCON-25) was held in the recent past ;
- (b) if so, the issues discussed and the decisions taken thereon; and
- (c) the follow-up action to implement the decisions taken in the Conference?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI)

(a) Yes, Sir. The 25th Conference of State & Union Territory Ministers of Information & Cinematography (SIMCON XXV) was held on 16th April, 2005.

(b) The issues discussed and the decisions taken thereon are at Annexure .

(c) Many of the issues discussed and agreed upon during the Conference comes within the ambit of State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations and they have to take action for their implementation. The State and UTs have been requested to initiate necessary action on those issues. This Ministry in consultation with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) is examining the need for enacting a separate legislation to counter Optical Disc piracy. FICCI has set up a working group consisting of Government and industry representatives to consider this matter. Regarding collection of annual statements from registered newspapers, Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) has already authorized the Regional Offices of Press Information Bureau (PIB), Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) and Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) to collect annual statements from the publishers and forward it to RNI, New Delhi. This Ministry is considering authorizing the District Information and Public Relation Officers (DIPROs) of all the districts throughout the country for collection of the annual statements from the publishers and for forwarding them to RNI. It has been decided in this Ministry to request the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) to include a module on Cable Laws and Piracy in the training courses of Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service officers. Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) has been requested to identify the training institutes where workshops/ training programmes regarding piracy in film and music sector can be held and budget requirement for the same. For the present, proposal has been sought from IIMC for doing workshops in LBSNAA and SVPNPA. The issue of notifying District Magistrates or Sub Divisional Magistrates or Police Commissioners as registering authority for Cable Operators, in place of the Head Post Master, would be considered alongwith the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on broadcasting and distribution of TV channels, which inter alia, concerns the implementation of Conditional Access System (CAS) also. This Ministry is considering these recommendations. For holding the next Secretary level meeting of Information, Publicity & Cinematography Departments of State Governments and UT Administrations, it has been decided to first seek State Governments views and inputs on the action taken by them on the issues agreed upon during the previous Conference.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 409 FOR ANSWER ON 24.11.2005

The following issues were discussed during the 25th Conference of State and Union Territory Ministers of Information & Cinematography:

1. Rationalisation of Entertainment Tax;
2. Issue of Piracy and need to tackle within the existing provisions of Indian Penal Code and Copyright Act. Discussion on Optical Disc Law;
3. Sensitizing authorized officers of the State Government on Acts, Rules and Codes on the contents of television channels and appointment of Complaint Redressal Officer from Information and Public Relations Departments of States for receiving complaints regarding violation of Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act;

4. TRAI's recommendations on issues relating to Broadcasting and distribution of T.V. Channels - comments of the State Governments;
 5. Exemption of Prasar Bharati from tax by the States; providing of Land, building, power supply to Prasar Bharati installations and security for its installations and personnel;
 6. Regulation of Content on TV Channels; and
- 7 Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI): Collection of Annual Statement to be furnished by Newspapers to District and Public Information Officers (DIPR) of the States

A consensus emerged during the discussion on the following:

- a) More effective implementation of anti piracy law with adequate powers to officials of State Government and local authorities.
- b) Licensing or registration of Video Libraries by State Government to bring it under regulatory regime of local area.
- c) To organize sensitization and training of State Government Officers by the Government of India for monitoring cable operators. Government of India had already taken up the programme but most of the State officers were unaware of the need to check piracy and they needed to be sensitized on the issue. Such programmes would be organized by the GOI. The State Governments / UT Administrations were requested to nominate officials from time to time.
- d) To work towards further reduction of entertainment tax so as to bring it in the range of 25-30%. To revive cinema industry and to encourage multiplexes.
- e) To designate District Information and Public Relations Officers (DIPRs) to collect annual returns/ statement in respect of Newspapers and forward it to Registrar of Newspapers for India.
- f) State Governments agreed to provide land and other logistic need like power, etc. to Prasar Bharati for effective functioning.
- g) States Governments also agreed to provide DTH Set top Boxes in the border areas, hilly areas and also for weaker sections. It was recommended that Government of India and States together work out a scheme to provide set top boxes to schools, aganwadis, etc.
- h) State Governments suggested that Cable operators should be registered with DM's or SDM's or Police Commissioner's in future instead of post offices as per existing procedure. Not only the new operators but also those who were to renew the registration should get themselves registered with DM/ SDM/ Police Commissioners or any other officers authorized by the State Governments for the purpose.
- i) A detailed scheme may be worked out by Government of India regarding CAS legislation in three metro cities - Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata in consultation with the concerned State Governments.
- j) Finally, it was decided that SIMCON will be held annually henceforth and official level interaction will be held twice a year.