

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:83

ANSWERED ON:24.11.2014

POSTPONEMENT OF SPECTRUM AUCTION

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

(a) whether a number of telecom operators have requested to the Government to postpone/defer the upcoming spectrum auction in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) & (b) Various Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), jointly and through their associations, have submitted their representations in the matter as detailed below:

1. M/s Vodafone, M/s Bharti Airtel, M/s Idea Cellular & M/s Reliance Communications, in their joint representation dated 30.10.2014, have proposed the following until adequate spectrum, as recommended by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), is made available, for the conduct of fair and equitable auctions:

i) They may be allowed to continue with their existing in-use spectrum.

ii) Auction be conducted when there is adequate supply of spectrum in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz bands, which should be auctioned simultaneously in a "Big Bang" auction.

iii) For the intervening period, licensees pay the price discovered in February 2014 for 1800 MHz with 900 MHz multiplier as recently recommended by TRAI. This may be adjusted subsequently if required, for the price discovered in the next round of auctions. Or alternatively, if it is taking too long to resolve supply constraints, Government can work towards a plan to auction all 900 MHz spectrum allocated to the 1996-2000 licenses together, when BSNL/MTNL licenses/spectrum comes for extension.

2. Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), in its letter, addressed to Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, dated 11.11.2014, has stated that:

i) Non-availability of sufficient spectrum in the forthcoming auction is a matter of deep concern and auction should be held only once adequate spectrum is made available.

ii) Availability of spectrum has to be ensured in the globally harmonized bands 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz.

iii) The current spectrum holdings needs to be made contiguous through re-arrangement amongst telecom operators and Government users.

iv) A clear and transparent spectrum roadmap should be made available.

3. Association of Unified Telecom Service Providers of India (AUSPI), in its letter, dated 17.11.2014, has stated that:

i) Spectrum requirement of 300 MHz and 200 MHz by 2016 and 2020 respectively should be provided as scheduled in the National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2012.

ii) Auctions may be scheduled only after resolving the supply side economics of the spectrum for all the relevant bands to match the demand side view of the Digital India, Ubiquitous Access of Broadband and Internet Access to citizens at affordable level.

iii) The total quantum as per the International harmonization norms (i.e. 25 MHz, 75 MHz & 60 MHz), in 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz band respectively, should be made available for commercial use before holding a fresh round of auction.

iv) AUSPI has been seeking 800 MHz auction as long overdue and its reserve price requires review immediately to facilitate its auction.

v) Any increase in reserve price of 900 MHz and 1800 MHz will be anti to Government Vision of Digital India.

(c) As per Result Framework Document (RFD) of the Department, the spectrum auction is to be completed by March 2015.