

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 491
ANSWERED ON 4TH DECEMBER, 2025**

RIISING DATA-COST

491 SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that major telecom operators like Jio and Airtel have discontinued their entry-level prepaid data plans, thereby raising the minimum cost for mobile data access;
- (b) whether the Ministry has assessed the impact of this move on low-income, rural or digitally underserved populations who rely on low-cost data plans;
- (c) if so, whether Government plans to ensure affordable baseline data access, such as by mandating a minimum valid entry-level plan or capping tariffs; and
- (d) whether the Ministry is exploring measures to increase competition in the telecom sector so that consumers continue to have low-cost data options?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) to (d) As per the existing regulatory tariff framework, tariff for telecommunication service is under forbearance except for services such as National Roaming, Rural Fixed Line Services, mobile number portability charges, leased circuits and USSD. Subject to compliance with extant regulatory provisions, service providers are free to design and offer tariffs based on their understanding of the market situation.

Service providers have the flexibility to decide various tariff components like the rates for different types of calls, SMS, data offers etc. with multiple combinations Including recharge value and validity for different service areas of their operation.

Tariffs are offered by service providers taking into account several factors including input costs, level of competition and other commercial considerations, subject to their compliance with regulatory principles, which include, inter alia, the principles of transparency, non-predation and non-discrimination.

It may be noted that adequate competition exists in the market with four telecom operators offering competitive plans in the market. It may also be noted that the Indian telecom tariffs are amongst the lowest in the world.
