

Domain Dilemma

New Dimensions of Cybersquatting

By SANJEEV NARULA

ONE of the greatest challenges in the arena of Internet is the domain name system. A domain name is a term used by Internet users to instruct their computers to obtain the Internet protocol number of a desired website. Since the IP address is a string of meaningless numbers which are difficult for human beings to remember, a system has been devised to overcome this problem. This system is what we understand as the domain name system.

Domain names are composed of letters and numbers which are neither random nor meaningless and are easy to remember. All domain names include a top-level domain (TLD) which is a string of two or three letters located at the extreme right handside of the domain name following the decimal point or dot. The second level domain (SLD) is requested by the party seeking the domain assignment. There are two categories of TLDs. In the first category we have the TLD names like .com, .net, .ort, .edu. Recently, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has announced the introduction of seven more TLDs in this category. The second category of TLDs is geographical. The geographical TLDs are two character codes that indicate a particular country or jurisdiction. The country codes are adopted from the 180-3166 standard developed by The International Organisation for Standardisation, for example, the country code for India is '.in'.

Since the domain names are the virtual identity of an entity on the Internet, they carry a considerable amount of goodwill, reputation and high recall value. The domain name can also in a way serve the trademark function of identifying a company in cyberspace. It has thus been seen that organisations have been willing to devote a considerable amount of money for the acquisition of names, which according to them, would best describe their presence in cyberspace. This has led to disputes where two entities with similar names want to adopt similar or identical domain names.

Besides there has been a growth of instances where an individual or organisation with no rights to a name may register a website with that name only with a view to extortion, diverging of web traffic, defamation etc. These people hope to demand ransoms from companies for the use of the

domain name and have been termed cybersquatters.

The rapid growth of the Internet brought these critical issues relating to the domain name disputes into focus. In 1997, the US government turned over the management of the Internet Domain Name System to ICANN. One of the primary functions of ICANN was to deal with cybersquatting and it also adopted the uniform domain name disputes resolution policy which now forms part of the contract between the registrant and the domain name registry.

The allocation of geographic TLDs has raised fresh issues. Each country has its country-specific geographic TLD and these two letter codes have gained importance to a large extent. Recently, a country known as Tuvalu has been allocated the geographic TLD '.tv'. Probably most of us are not even aware of the location of Tuvalu which is an underdeveloped Polynesian island

IN BRIEF

- Domain names, the virtual identity of an internet entity, have a high recall value
- The rapid growth of the Internet has brought issues relating to domain name disputes into focus
- Cybersquatters have got into the act often with a view to extortion
- Today, even top level domains have not been spared

spread over hundreds of miles in the Pacific Ocean.

This nation has a population of about just 10,000. The TLD '.tv' was of virtually no value for Tuvalu which has, like an ace businessman, cashed in on the potential the letters 'tv' carry. Tuvalu has struck a deal with a Canadian company 'dotTV' which could see the potential and power of the letters 'tv', which is acknowledged as the most widely recognised two-letter symbol in the world of the Internet. As per the agreement between Tuvalu and dotTV, dotTV got the exclusive rights to register domain names ending with '.tv'. This agreement is said to be for a period of 10 years and it is projected that a minimum of US \$4 million will be generated. Tuvalu plans to use the proceeds to make infrastructural improvements to enhance the quality of life for its citizens. Tuvalu is a minority

shareholder in dotTV and also has a presence on DotTV's board. DotTV has fully exploited the potential of the TLD ".tv" and instead of registering the names on the first-come-first-served policy like other registrars, has sold the names depending upon their value.

It is also reported that certain names have been auctioned with the opening bid being quoted as above six figures. This has highlighted the absence of any ICANN policy for the geographic TLDs. The way the geographic TLD of Tuvalu has been used clearly indicates that the medium of the Internet will continue to pose fresh challenges. The credibility and the image of ICANN as the administrative body of the Internet has time and again been questioned and one of the core functions and objectives of cybersquatting has not been successfully addressed.

The geographic TLDs were provided by ICANN to indicate that the entity having its domain name ending with the geographic TLD is in some way related to the country which the geographic TLD represents. However, the way the domain names are being registered under the category of '.tv', it shows that this, in fact, has not been achieved.

A similar case has been observed for the TLD '.fm' which has been designated to the federal states of Micronesia (ISM) and is being marketed as "a great sounding web address". BRS media is the exclusive agent for FSM telecom for the purposes of managing, marketing and registering FSM telecom '.fm'. Like '.tv', '.fm' also has a great and high recall value.

Whereas earlier we had cases where cybersquatters were holding onto the SLDs which were akin to the trademarks on the trade names of various entities, it has now been seen that the TLDs have also not been spared. The basic purpose of having geographic TLDs has been defeated which now would not indicate to the end-user that a particular entity with the TLD ending in '.tv' has probably nothing to do with the country the TLD name is related to. It would not be inappropriate to say that cybersquatting is now reaching a new dimension where now TLD names are being held.

ICANN urgently needs to frame policies to address these issues so that for the end-user, the TLD actually represents what it should.

THE FOURTH ESTATE

Foreign Participation And Constitution

By AG NOORANI

THE Information and Broadcasting Minister, Mrs Sushma Swaraj's credibility was not enhanced by her contradictory statements on allowing foreign equity in print media, so soon after her return to office. On 10 November she not only declared that the Government had an "open mind" on the issue and invited a national debate on it, but implied clearly that neither harm to the national interest

nor breach of principle would ensure thereby. "What is the harm if there is rethinking (on the Union Cabinet's decision in 1955 barring foreign participation in the print media) in today's context, when there is rethinking on every other sector?"

Mrs Swaraj would, doubtless, have ruled out the option completely if she had thought it harmful or fundamentally wrong. She is known to approach issues with an open mouth rather than an open mind. For, she beat a retreat exactly a week later on 17 November, as we shall see. To appreciate the vigour of the somersault that day one must note some of the formulations of 10 November: "Whatever view emerges the government will go by it. So far no decision has been taken, and no time frame has been set for it."

PUBLIC OPINION

In an interview to *India Today*, soon thereafter, the Minister elaborated: "The Government will be guided by public opinion while formulating a policy on the entry of foreign print media". The issue, dated 27 November, hit the stands a week earlier. Mrs Swaraj must have spoken just before 17 November. But on this day, she no longer spoke of being guided by the public. She ruled out foreign equity in categorical terms though the debate had not, could not have, gone far within the week. Mark her formulations of 17 November: "There is no need to permit foreign equity, it is not desirable at present". Was this not evident to her on 10 November? Whatever had happened in the course of the week to bring home to her the obvious? Mrs Swaraj now added: "The concerns of 1955 are still valid". No prizes are awarded for guessing who educated her on self-evident truths and told her where the government stood.

But we might as well ask ourselves why the issue has been raised in this rather devious manner repeatedly since 1994. A writer in the Sangh parivar's organ *Organiser* (3 December) provides an explanation which is not unconvincing: "There are credible reports that certain elements entrenched in the establishment are keen to allow foreigners to launch newspapers in India and that the PMO had prepared a detailed note for the consideration of the Cabinet that stipulated 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in print media. Swaraj's predecessor, Arun Jaitley, had observed that personally speaking he saw nothing wrong in it but in his public utterances he had also advanced reasons against allowing foreigners to launch newspapers

The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.

from Indian soil."

Overlooked in all these deliberations are the fundamentals on which our polity rests. In a democracy, the Fourth Estate is as much a participant in the governance as the other three. And you can no more allow foreigners to become its members than you can permit their membership of executive, the legislature and the judiciary.



Which is why, also, courts everywhere refuse audience to foreign lawyers. Counsel are officers of the court and a part of the judicial process. The Fourth Estate's status as "surrogates of the people" was recognised by the United States Supreme Court in 1980 in the *Richmond Newspapers* case. Its importance has grown since Edmund Burke's immortal words two centuries ago: "There were Three Estates in Parliament, but in the Reporter's Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important than them all..."

That is precisely why, while the Constitution confers the fundamental right to life and personal liberty on all persons (Article 21), it confines the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression strictly to "citizens".

MERCENARY

The implication is obvious. A journal owned by an Indian would exist as of right, protected by the Constitution. The foreign owner would enter the profession by the Government's leave and licence and exist on its sufferance. He has no commitment to India. His interest is purely mercenary. He will readily toe the Government's line and operate on its behalf, unless it clashes with some particular interest of his own. Governments are fully aware of that vulnerability. Hence, the temptation to let the foreigner in. Once ensconced comfortably in the tent, neither the camel nor its owner will be easy to throw out on grounds of proven mischief. Vested interests would have grown up and friendship struck in the right places. The ambitious intruder will begin operating politically; not indeed, to promote any public policy, but in furtherance of his own interests. Politicians and media persons with whom partnerships are forged or "friendships" struck will speak up for him noisily.

It is perfectly legitimate for the Indian press to influence public opinion in times of political crises. That is its duty. It is another for, say, a Rupert Murdoch to do so. He will acquire a voice in India's politics — as he did in those of the United Kingdom because the unscrupulous Mrs Margaret Thatcher needed his support. What Mr Louis Heren, former Deputy Editor of *The Times* (before Murdoch bought it)

writes of him in his fascinating book *The Power of the Press?* should make his admirers here ponder a bit.

The First Press Commission's Report (1954) discussed the subject of "foreign nationals as owners" (page 272) and viewed it with "disfavour". In 1955 the Union Cabinet endorsed this view and that decision still holds the field. In 1960 amendments were carried out in the ancient Press and Registration of Books Act, 1967 (which sorely cries for a comprehensive review). Section 5 lays down that no newspaper shall be permitted in India "except in conformity with the rules hereinafter laid down". In 1960 the proviso to Section 5 was amended to bar, along with minors, a person "who does not ordinarily reside in India" from editing a newspaper or making the requisite declaration under the Section. It requires a declaration only from the printer and the publisher.

RESIDENT

But sub-section 2B says where they are not the owners of the paper, "the declaration shall specify the name of the owner and shall also be accompanied by an authority in writing from the owner authorising such person to make and subscribe such declaration." Reading Section 5(2B) and the proviso, it is possible to argue that what the proviso bars is a declaration by a non-resident not a letter of authority by a non-resident owner to a resident printer and publisher. This lacuna must be rectified.

The proviso covers persons who do not "ordinarily reside in India". The concepts of domicile, of ordinary residence, and citizenship differ. The proviso will not bar a foreigner who is ordinarily resident in India. But it will very much bar an Indian who is not so resident. The explicit bar in the proviso — "nor shall any such persons edit a newspaper" — should be amended to cover ownership as well, and Indian citizenship should be added explicitly as a condition to owning, editing, printing or publishing a newspaper.

The Second Press Commission's Report (1982) discussed this subject rather perfunctorily (in keeping with the generally poor quality of the document). It considered the topic in the context of "foreign money in the Indian press" and recommended that "there should be a specific legal provision under which no newspaper undertaking should have any foreign ownership either in the form of shares or in the form of loans."

While on this Report, one might mention that it refers to an amendment to the Industries, (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951, sponsored in 1979 by George Fernandes as Industries Minister, which added to the list of industries covered by the Act the "printing, including litho printing industry". That was a singularly retrograde amendment. The Report recommends the addition of the words: "other than printing presses utilised mainly for printing newspaper". The amendment is essential to ensure press freedom.

Will DTT kill DTH?

Mean
media
ST-8

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 13. — The digital terrestrial transmission policy, now awaiting the I&B minister Mrs Sushma Swaraj's clearance, could radically change the television scene in the country.

If the Centre goes ahead with the DTT, it could mean the end of the direct-to-home or the DTH system and change cable systems drastically. The DTH is more expensive as it requires viewers to have a Ku-band dish and a set-top box.

Cable, as it is now, will also have to change by including localised programming from city or even, locality-based channel programming, Internet and telephone services.

The ministry sees a strong role for the private sector in the DTT development, sources said.

The DTT calls for digitalisation which means TV beams will be so narrowed that a

DD TO AUCTION MORE SLOTS

NEW DELHI, Dec. 13. — While newspaper owners have begun asking the government for a change in the policy of foreign investment in the print media, Doordarshan is likely to auction more slots as a private firm producing news programmes will vacate its slots in the morning and evening.

Several newspaper owners today met top government officials to press for a change in the policy of the foreign investment. Mrs Sushma Swaraj recently initiated a discussion on the possibility of the entry of foreign print media, but later said this wasn't the right time. The Centre forbids foreign investment in the print media — a policy that has been in place for the last 45 years.

Meanwhile, after Kerry Packer's Channel 9 bought three hours on DD Metro, the DD is ready to auction slots once again as a private firm has pulled out. Whether Packer, which paid about Rs 120 crore (much more than it can hope to generate from revenue), will apply again is not known, but with one foreign organisation leasing time on DD, others can also apply and hope to buy time. — SNS

transmitter can accept five or six channels rather than one analog channel. The ministry envisages DTT bids for every major state to be leased to private sectors — though there will be caps to prevent monopoly. Once DTT begins, viewers

will be able to watch all private channels available without cable-operators' help.

The policy calls for the entire TV area to be divided statewise. To get DTT rights in each state, the highest bidder will have to pay Prasar Bharati a sum that

is likely to be large. The money can be used by Prasar Bharati, either alone or jointly, to set up DTT transmitters throughout the state. Each transmitter can hold only six channels. The areas that have demand for more channels will have more transmitters.

Certain restrictions may be placed on the bidder, who will be allowed to lease transmitter space to other private channels. Approximately a third of the space should be for Doordarshan channels. Leaving the DD space and that of the bidder, the rest has to be leased out.

Besides, the successful bidder will have to pay annual rent to Prasar Bharati for the rights to the transmitters.

This move, if accepted, will considerably lower Centre's investment in this costly project. It will also allow the cable-channels to penetrate markets (about 70 per cent of the national TV market) which is now reached only by the DD.

THE STATESMAN

14 DEC 2000

India must establish an information security system to counter cyberthreats from China and Pakistan

Murari
AT-10
29/12

Hack the hackers

BY RAVI VISVESVARAYA PRASAD

SINCE THE Pokhran blasts, Pakistani hackers have been regularly attacking websites of Indian organisations. The homepages of the Prime Minister's Office, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, the Ministry of Information Technology and Videsh Sanchar Nigam were hacked into and defaced with anti-India obscenities.

Pakistani hacker groups like Death to India, Kill India and G-Force Pakistan openly circulate instructions for attacking Indian computers. The websites http://www.f**kindia.org, run by Nicholas Culshaw of Karachi, and http://www.f**kindia.com, run by Arshad Qureshi of Long Beach, California, contain malicious anti-Indian propaganda along with step-by-step instructions for hacking into thousands of Indian websites.

Surprisingly, the Indian Government has not attempted to disable these websites. The Ministry of Information Technology has not even demanded an explanation from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) as to how domain names like http://www.f**kindia.org and http://www.f**kindia.com could be registered at all.

Indian defence and intelligence officials dismissed these activities as the handiwork of Pakistani adolescents who did not have the backing of Pakistani military and intelligence forces. However, the former additional secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, B. Raman, cautioned that India should not underestimate the havoc that can be wrought even by unorganised teenage hackers.

India's security establishment has also ignored information warfare capabilities possessed by Islamic militant organisations. Rand Corporation recently warned that Osama bin Laden's Egyptian followers can immediately cripple the information infrastructures of Russia and India. Clark Staten, Executive Director, Emergency Response and Research Institute, Chicago, warned that Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon, Jamaat Islami, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Khilafah, Izz al-Din Al-Kassam and Nida'ul Islam had developed offensive capabilities in information warfare.

More serious than Pakistan and Islamic militants is the threat posed by China. According to Timothy Thomas of the US Army's Foreign Military Studies Office in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, China's leaders reckon that it can achieve hegemony in Asia only by integrating information warfare into its geopolitical strategies. Thomas stated that China is quickly integrating the latest information warfare techniques into its People's War concept. This development has been ignored by the West but will

have far-reaching strategic and operational implications.

In mid-1999, China established a special task force on information warfare composed of senior politicians, military officers and academics, headed by Xie Guang, Vice-Minister of the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence. This task force has prepared detailed plans to cripple the civilian information infrastructures of Taiwan, the United States, India, Japan and South Korea. Two members, Qi Jianguo and Dai Qingmin, have formulated a comprehensive scheme.

First, China will not attack military or political targets in these countries but would target their financial, banking, electrical supply, water, sewage and telecommunications networks. Second, Chinese companies will establish business links with private companies in these countries. After carrying on legitimate business for some time, they would insert malicious computer codes and viruses over commercial e-mail services.

Third, the viruses and malicious codes would be sent through computers in universities in third countries so that they could not be traced back to China. Fourth, the attacks would be launched when the political leadership of the target countries is preoccupied with election campaigns.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has conducted several field exercises recently. An Informaticised People's Warfare Network Simulation Exercise was conducted in Echeng district of Hubei province. Five hundred soldiers simulated cyberattacks on the telecommunications, electricity, finance and television sectors of Taiwan, India, Japan and South Korea.

Ten functions were rehearsed in another exercise at Xian in Jinan Military Region: planting information mines, conducting information reconnaissance, changing network data, releasing information bombs, dumping garbage, disseminating propaganda, applying information deception, releasing clone information organising info-defence and establishing network spy stations.

In Datong, 40 PIA specialists are preparing methods of seizing control of networks of commercial internet service providers in Taiwan, India,

Japan and South Korea. They held demonstrations for the Beijing Region Military Comm'l, Central Military Commission and General Staff Directorate. In October, Chief of General Staff Fu Quanyou presided over an exercise in Lanzhou and Shenyang Military Regions which simulated electronic confrontation with countries south and west of Gobi Desert. This focused on electronic reconnaissance, counter-reconnaissance, electronic interference and counter-interference.

It tested the battle readiness of PLA's command automation systems, command operations, situation maps, audio and graphics processes and controls, and data encryption systems. Smaller exercises were carried out in July in the Chengdu Military Region and in August in the Guangzhou Military Region.

The PLA has also enlisted support from universities. It established the Communications Command Academy in Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, in collaboration with Hubei's engineering universities. The Navy Engineering College, headed by Shao Zijun, also in Wuhan, is collaborating on secret projects on information warfare with the Communications Command Academy.

The PLA established the Information Engineering University, headed by Major General Zhou Rongting, in Zhengzhou, capital of Henan province. It did this by taking over and combining Henan's civilian Institute of Information Engineering, Electronic Technology College and Survey and Mapping College. This will specialise in remote image information engineering, satellite-navigation and positioning engineering, and map data banks of the regions from India to Indo-China.

The PLA also established the Science and Engineering University, headed by Major General Si Laiyi, by combining the civilian Institute of Communications Engineering, the Institute of the Engineering Corps, the Air Force's Meteorology Institute and the Research Institute of General Staff Headquarters. Si Laiyi attracted over 400 civilian professors from universities all over China. He also announced the establishment of a new Institute of Computer and Command Automation and persuaded 60 experts of Chinese origin settled

in the West to return to work there.

A fourth PLA institute is the National Defence Science and Technology University in Changsha, under direct supervision of the Central Military Commission, where the Yin He series of supercomputers has been developed.

To counter cyberthreats from China, Pakistan and militant Islamic groups, the Indian Government should immediately establish a national centre for information systems security. It should tap the expertise of universities and private software and internet companies.

In addition to the Government and defence sectors, it should cater to the banking sector, stock exchanges, telecom and internet networks, power and water supplies, and transportation. It should be structured on the lines of the American President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection which was created by Bill Clinton in 1996 and in which several US corporations and universities are partners — principally IBM, Dell, BellSouth, GTE and Carnegie Mellon University.

India should also provide support to the numerous dissident Chinese hacker groups formed to avenge the Tiananmen Square massacre. One is headed by Lemon Li who operates from St Nazare, France. Another is headed by Michael Ming and functions out of College Station, Texas.

The most successful hackers have been Yellow Pages and Blondes. Blondes was founded by Blondie Wong who operates from Toronto. Mao Zedong's men had killed his parents. But since he was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Wong decided to use only peaceful means to overthrow the Beijing regime.

The Bangkok chapter of Blondes is headed by an Englishwoman, Tracey Kinchen, who was earlier an MI5 agent. Her team disabled a PLA spy satellite by sending spurious signals using cellular modems. Another Englishwoman, Ashton Tyler Baines, heads the Kowloon chapter of Blondes. Her team has launched over 72,000 cyberattacks against PLA.

Baines claimed that Blondes and Yellow Pages have already placed over 40 computer operators as moles inside PLA's cyberspace divisions. "We can infiltrate, alter and even crash their communications satellites, space program, supercomputers and networks. We are putting in backdoors and writing bad code into their servers. We have already infected off-site copies of their CD-ROMs," said Baines.

Could that provide the Indian Government with some ideas of how to counter a Chinese infotech attack?



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 DEC 2000

THE INTERNET Age heralds a new economy but some of the old rules still apply. Managing a dotcom is no different from running a brick-and-mortar giant: it's still the people that make the company. Carried away by their enthusiasm, many young entrepreneurs are forgetting this fundamental point. With technology changing rapidly, and consumer preferences evolving every day, a dotcom's ability to survive and fulfill its objectives depends increasingly on its ability to recruit and retain the best minds. For a company to be agile, its people ought to remain steady. In an industry with one of the highest turnovers, how does one try and ensure this? There are three key factors to be addressed.

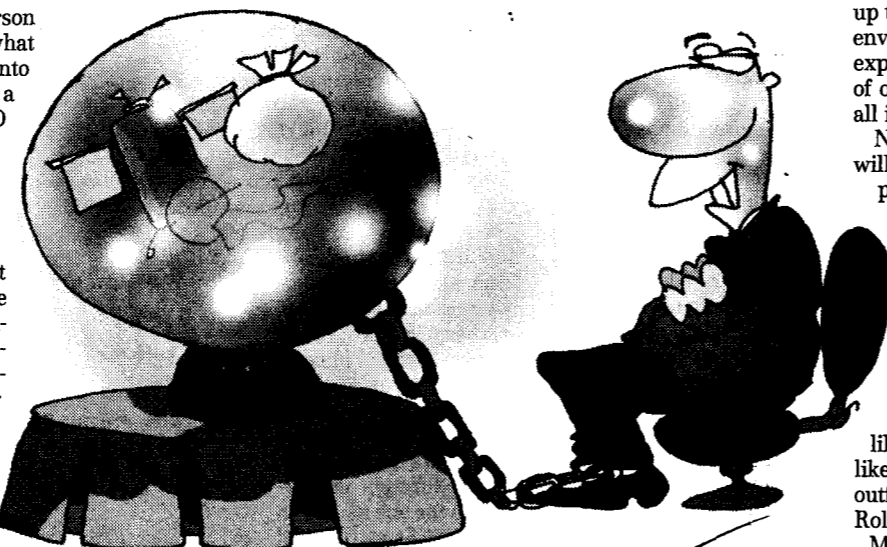
Recruitment
Dotcoms recruit first through networking and then through ads. Networking ensures a trusted reference for a new hire and could be extremely valuable in a startup wherein each person plays a key role from day one. Unfortunately, though, in a society that works so much on the basis of "who knows whom," networking is often misused. People are hired chiefly because they are close and trusted acquaintances. The crucial second step of evaluating their suitability for the task at hand is largely overlooked or underplayed. This, however, should always be the most important factor in any recruitment drive, be it through personal contacts or ads — especially when

DON'T BUST A DOTCOM

Some of the rules for running brick-and-mortar companies apply to businesses in the New Economy as well, says Natasha Pratap

building a company. The person must be the best suited for what they will be doing and must fit into the culture of the organisation as a whole. After all, when the CEO of a startup begins hiring, he is not just looking to employ people, but is really trying to lay the foundation of a future giant.

Work Culture
This is the intangible factor that determines whether an employee wakes up in the morning dreading another day at work, or looking forward to it. Dotcom managements need to be very clear at the outset about what kind of a culture they want to promote and be actively involved in doing so on a day to day level. Such a vision is essential, as it will guide the way the company evolves and hold it together as it grows. Or it will develop on an ad hoc basis and the company runs the risk of certain unacceptable behavioural patterns that are detrimental to its functioning taking root.



In a start-up, the management ought to set the tone for the hours of work, the dress code, the (non)hierarchical nature of the organisational structure, the (in)formality of conversation during working hours, and

the frequency and duration of breaks. A formal policy also needs to be developed for things that affect working conditions such as smoking, playing of music, use of cell phones, and entertaining of visitors. It is also

up to the management to establish an environment that encourages the expression of ideas, the differences of opinions and the fair treatment of all individuals.

Needless to say, every new recruit will affirm or detract from the company's culture. The management's vision and participation is particularly important in binding together employees that have been hired through a networking effort and those that responded to ads. In the long run, the management's attitude to its employees will determine whether the company functions like a little family-run operation or like a competent and professional outfit.

Roles and Responsibilities

Much of the chaos in dotcoms today is because clear roles and responsibilities have not been defined. This may be difficult in a startup because the need of the day cannot be foreseen and, therefore, identified — but it's essential. The only way to plough through the inherent unpredictability

of the dotcom world, is to have a clear vision of where the company is going and what each person needs to do to get there.

Right from the time a person is hired, she needs to have a clearly defined role that capitalizes on her talent and furthers the company's end goal. She needs to be able to handle tasks that go beyond her job description, without losing focus of her primary function, which she alone can fulfill. In order to strike this balance, she must exercise some restraint and not rush to do something simply because it needs to be done without first assessing who the best person in the organisation is who can do it. Otherwise, it is easy for roles to get blurred and for talent to get dissipated because it is incorrectly applied.

The management of a startup must also frequently reiterate the company's vision so that no one loses sight of the big picture but understands what the company as a whole is really driving toward. Without the continued reinforcement of this vision, it is possible that a startup will either get mired in day-to-day problems or that it will not advance rapidly as an entity even though individuals in the company may be working extremely hard. Ultimately, as with a brick and mortar company, the success of a dotcom is the result of a team effort. Each team member needs to be doing what she's good at, and led toward a common goal by a strong leadership.

ABOUT 100 years ago, the imaginative robber baron Jay Gould had a bright idea. He organized a handful of train companies in St. Louis, and together they gained control of the two railway bridges into town. This coalition then proceeded to squeeze huge fees out of every rival that wanted to use the bridges — until the Supreme Court put an end to the lucrative game in a famous 1912 case, U.S. vs. Terminal Railroad Assn. Deeming the bridges to be essential facilities for the local train industry, the highcourt forced Gould & Co. to open them up on an equal basis to everybody.

This distant Industrial Age precedent may not seem to have much to do with today's digital economy. But it's becoming more relevant every day. Across the high-tech landscape, companies increasingly are gaining control over critical pieces of the U.S. information infrastructure. Like Gould's Terminal Railroad Assn., in a sense, these companies are becoming the sole owners of some of the key bridges on the Info Highway. Microsoft Corp owns the Windows operating system—the brains inside of 90% of U.S. personal computers. AT&T controls some of the underground cables that promise to offer consumers high-speed Net access. America Online Inc. dominates the world of instant messaging, a popular new service allowing people to send one another e-mails at once. In each of these cases, rivals and consumer groups have complained that the monopolist stake unfair advantage of their power—or at least are in a position to do so (table). And regulators have been rereading cases like Terminal Railroad and asking a fundamental question: How much responsibility does a monopolist have to share its private property with rivals? Or, to put it another way, when should the government force a key technological "bridge" to be open?

While the debate is only beginning, regulators are already taking steps to protect the principle of openness in a digital economy. As part of his package of interim remedies in the Microsoft case, U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson plans to force the company to share proprietary information about the source code in Windows with rivals.

In May, a French court ruled that it was illegal for France Telecom to make wireless Internet customers to go to its own Web site. Instead, they had to be offered a choice of wireless portals. And the Federal Communications Commission plans to study whether cable companies such as AT&T should be forced to open their wires to competing Internet service providers.

TRADE-OFF: The tech industry has an enormous stake in the outcome of the global openness debate. Collectively, cable companies such as AT&T, wireless service providers such as Vodafone AirTouch, and business-to-business market makers such as General Motors are spending billions of dollars to build, buy, and upgrade new communications and commerce networks. The rich valuations that investors initially granted some of these companies were predicated on the notion that they would be able to harvest fields of gold by controlling these networks. But now some analysts think AT&T, for example, may have overestimated its ability to control its recently acquired cable companies. "They thought they could operate a closed system and that they wouldn't have to share any of the profits," says Scott C. Cleland, telecommunications analyst at Precursor Group. "And that was a flawed assumption."

Philosophically, the debate over openness juxtaposes two conflicting principles: respecting private property and preserving the ability to compete. On the one hand, says Federal Trade Commission Chairman Robert Pitofsky, trustbusters don't want to sit idly by and watch companies

WHOSE NET IS IT, ANYWAY?

Web access is becoming dicey for industry and regulators, reports Dan Carney

transform the Net into a series of monopolies. On the other, they don't want to discourage companies from investing in the Net by demanding that they will have to share the fruits of their labors. "That's the trade-off," says Pitofsky. "It's essential that we get it right."

Trustbusters are facing this dilemma more frequently because many information industries seem to have a natural tendency toward monopoly. In large part, that's due to the "network effect." The more people use a particular digital product or service—say, Microsoft's operating system or AOL's instant messaging—the more attractive it is compared with rivals', and the more new consumers will adopt it. Overtime, this phenomenon leads to winner take-all markets. That worries openness advocates. At bottom, they believe in the simple principle that information should be able to travel freely from one end of the global communications network to the other. If, say, AT&T makes it harder for a customer to access rival Web sites, that raises serious concerns about free expression. "It is

innovation and dampen investment. Cable and phone companies are spending huge sums upgrading their networks because they believe there is a profit to be made. Investment will dry up if companies figure there is nothing to be gained by it, argues James W. Cicconi, executive vice-president for law and government affairs at AT&T. "The pioneer company goes out and takes all the risks. The capital and builds the network. And now another company says: 'Thank you very much, we'll take over now and ride that system for free,'" says Cicconi.

Another criticism of openness is that it can require excessive regulation. Consider the issue of AT&T's underground cables. If the government forces the company to share its lines with competing Internet service providers, then it may have to get into the complex business of deciding how much AT&T should charge them. "It's important that we not back into a situation where we end up with a much greater level of government intervention in matters of pricing," says J. Gregory Sidak, fellow at the American

who are open," says Greg Simon, co-director of the open Net coalition.

Wireless: The next big fight could well break out in the world of wireless. So far, the issue has not been big in Washington. But in Europe, where wireless services are widespread, there have already been two skirmishes. On June 21, Britain's BT CellNet Ltd. bowed to pressure to allow its wireless customers to choose rival Internet portals as the home page on their cell phones rather than its own default homepage. In May, France Telecom was forced to take similar action. "It's valuable real estate for the carriers, and they're going to have a hard time letting it go," says IDC wireless analyst Callie Nelson.

These issues, say experts, are bound to flare up in the U.S. Sprint PCS, the most aggressive U.S. wireless service provider, currently offers no way for customers to reprogram their cellphones to select home pages. Instead, it offers a menu of preassembled content from 30 providers. Those slots are occupied by high-profile companies such as AOL and Bloomberg, which pay Sprint (FON) placement fees running into the tens of millions of dollars. To visit a Web site that isn't a preferred content provider, users must click on to a second screen and press a "go to" icon, bringing up another screen for entering a Web address. Hardly the easiest process. By year end, the company will offer an option that lets consumers configure their own home page. "We're very open to being open," says Sprint PCS Senior Vice-President Keith Pagusch. Maybe so, but if consumers start to complain that wireless systems are too closed, regulators might come off the sidelines.

Net backbone: It wasn't widely noticed at the time, but openness was a big reason for the Justice Dept. challenge in June to the World Com-Sprint merger. Together, they would have controlled 53% of the Internet backbone. That made trustbusters fear that the new company would have the power to discriminate against rival networks and force Net service providers to come knocking on WorldCom's (WCOM) door. "The real threat," says Joel Klein, assistant Attorney General for anti-trust, "is that they could privatize a portion of the Internet." Trustbusters are continuing to watch this one closely.

B2B and B2C exchanges: Since the beginning of the year, dozens of industries ranging from aerospace to health care have announced joint-venture Web sites to buy or sell goods and services online. These sites greatly increase efficiency but could potentially stifle competition. Some Justice investigators are concerned, for example, that a ticket-vending site to be run by five major airlines could limit information from rival carriers. Alternatively, it could get exclusive fare information from the five and then refuse to share it with online rivals such as Travelocity.com.

How far are trustbusters willing to push the openness issue? So far, they're giving away few clues. Klein has been loath to lay down hard rules for when the government should mandate open access, since Internet monopolies have varying degrees of power. "They can be an impenetrable barrier, or they can simply create a hurdle," says Klein. "One needs to look at the specifics."

Those words may offer some comfort to the many companies facing demands to open up their private property. But make no mistake: Trustbusters are more aggressive about the issue of openness than they have been in years. If things keep up this way, more and more corporate chieftains could find themselves reading the old story of Jay Gould and the Terminal Railroad Assn. — **BusinessWeek**



PROMISES TO KEEP: Time Warner and AOL say they'll allow open access after the merger

basically the First Amendment idea—that you and I should be able to speak without having somebody interposing in between," says Charles Nesson, director of Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet & Society.

Another justification for openness, say advocates, is that it encourages innovation. When accompany controls a key piece of the infrastructure, it can cripple rivals that try to attack its monopoly. Indeed, Microsoft was able to wage a successful predatory campaign against Netscape Communications Corp. to protect its Windows monopoly. By mandating openness in some markets, it may be possible to prevent monopolies from abusing their power, says Lawrence Lessig, author of Code and other Laws of Cyberspace. "If innovators realize that the network will not be used strategically against them—that is, that the network will remain neutral—then there's reason to develop radical new applications," says Lessig.

PROFIT MOTIVES: But opponents argue that government-imposed openness could do just the opposite—stifle

Enterprise Institute. Clearly, the debate over openness is still raging. But that's not stopping consumers and business rivals from trying to force dominant companies to share their private property. As a result, regulators are increasingly going to be dealing with this issue, whoever wins the White House in the fall. Here's where key industries are headed:

Cable: For the moment, the forces of openness appear to be winning in this arena—largely because the many cable companies have privately agreed to go along with their wishes. AT&T has pledged to let the former Mindspring Enterprises, now part of Internet service provider Earthlink (ELNK), hook up to its cable network. Similarly, AOL and Time Warner (TWX) have said they expect to enter into open-access agreements with other ISPs after their merger closes. But not everyone is convinced that voluntary self-regulation is a long-term answer. There are still plenty of games cable operators could play to favor their own business partners. Time

What rules will govern the e-economy?

STEPHEN S. COHEN is a professor of regional planning at the University of California, and co-director of the Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy (BRIE) — an internationally recognized source of ideas and information on the interactions of technology, markets and economies. Prof. Cohen has extensive experience as an international economic consultant, having worked abroad with the OECD, the UN, the governments of France and Denmark, the Prefect of Paris, the presidents of Columbia and Spain, and several major European corporations. In the US, he has consulted to the White House, the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress, the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, the Department of Commerce, and several corporations. Professor Cohen's articles have appeared in Science, The Harvard Business Review, The Los Angeles Times, and The New York Times, Technology Review. His books include The New Global Economy in the Information Age

MASTERMIND / Stephen S. Cohen

At least five key debates will decide what our rules (to govern the E-economy) will be. First is the debate over the strength of intellectual property rights. Should our personal information — data about us as economic, social, and indeed genetic beings — be somebody's property? Can an enterprise "own" its business model?

The second debate is over industrial structure. When should monopolies be broken up? What restrictions should be placed on firms with dominant positions that some claim provide "essential services"? Will it be possible for the E-economy to have oligopolies that produce most of the benefits of competition and most of the advantages of economies of scale, thus allowing us to have our cake and eat it too, or will we have to choose between tolerating monopoly or abandoning efficient scale?

The third debate is over access. Will firms that make up one layer of the network be allowed to prescribe their users' access to other layers — as TCI (now AT&T) cable intended in restricting its customers to @Home as their only possible ISP? Or will courts and legislatures be able to mandate access and divide up technologies in such a way as to create open and interconnected institutions?

The fourth debate is over privacy and security. Who "owns" and who can make use of the massive electronic trails that each of us will leave over the next generation? How much will each of us be able to shield knowledge of his or her actions and preferences from not just the government but also from private entrepreneurs who believe that knowledge of consumers can be turned into money and market power?

And the fifth debate is over inclusion: the digital divide. Generations ago America chose to include all Americans in the telephone system. But it was easier to create rules for universal access to the telephone than it will be for Internet based information systems. There is no single provider to internalize the cross subsidies. There is no simple equivalent of a dial tone and a local call. And unlike the telephone or television, the greater the education level the greater the value, in most cases, of the benefit of Internet access.

We believe that there has to be policy to eliminate the digital divide.

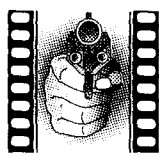
(More at econ161.berkeley.edu/TotW/TIT_blueprint.html and brie.berkeley.edu/~briewww/courses/sc/cp221/bio.html)



Shah claims funds for film were his own, not mafia's

By A Staff Reporter

MUMBAI: Diamond merchant and big-time film financier Bharat Shah, who was summoned for questioning by the police on



Saturday in connection with the growing controversy surrounding the financing of his film, *Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* as well as the alleged nexus between its producer and the underworld, said that the entire cost of making the film had been borne by him. However, the police does not appear to be convinced that the underworld has not financed the movie or played a key role in its making.

"I have already spent Rs 12.7 crore on the film and have still to pay Rs 3 crore to some of the artistes," Mr Shah said after the second day of his interrogation.

On Friday, Mr Shah, the world rights controller of the film, was questioned on whether he was aware of the links between Nazim Rizvi, the producer of the movie, and Karachi-based gangster Chhota Shakeel, a key lieutenant of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. He was also asked to substantiate the record of payments made by him in connection with the film.

The police are sceptical of Mr Shah's claims of being the sole financier as they claim to have tape-recorded conversations between

Rizvi and Shakeel in which frequent references have been made to a "BS". Countering the suggestion that 'BS' stood for his initials, Mr Shah said that they could refer to anything. "Policemen don't understand how the film industry works," he said. "The mafia does not invest money in films, but just extorts money from those who make hit films."

Mr Shah has financed big-budget films like *Mission Kashmir*, *Mohabbatein*, *Pardes*, *Aur Pyaar Ho Gaya*, *Gupt* and *Border*. His film, *Raju Chacha*, featuring Ajay Devgan and Kajol, is scheduled for release this Christmas.

The police also suspect underworld funding as Rizvi, who was arrested under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) on Wednesday, is virtually unknown in the industry, having produced a couple of C-grade flops. Mr Shah denied that he was forced by the underworld to tie up with Rizvi to make *Chori Chori*.

Mr Shah also said he would challenge the seizure of his film's prints by the police. However, police sources say that the MCOCA allows law enforcers to attach the properties of criminals and their associates.

Actor Salman Khan, who plays the lead role in the film, was also grilled by the police on Saturday.

He drove right up to the crime branch building. The star emerged from the crime branch office after six hours and was whisked away from the backdoor.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 DEC 2000

E-insurance for E-merging risks

Internet transactions are risky. A standard insurance policy may not cover all the risks that may arise in cyberspace, say Kirit Javali and Naoshir Vachha

THE OPENING up of the insurance industry in India would boost competition, facilitate technology transfer and lead to new products, better customer service, deeper and wider insurance coverage and many more opportunities for employment.

The liberalisation of the insurance industry has started off on a right note, with the regulatory framework in place. The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority recently issued the first set of licences to private insurance companies. As new private sector entrants enter into India, opportunities in the insurance industry are up for grabs. One important aspect of the insurance industry which is gaining prominence the world over is the development of technology and cyber-insurance strategies. Cyberspace is a risky place. Companies conducting business over the internet are exposed to a variety of new, unpredictable and serious exposures such as servers crashing, computer viruses, destruction of data, e-mails disappearing, and attack from hackers for which there are few precedents in terms of risk management and even less actual insurance coverage.

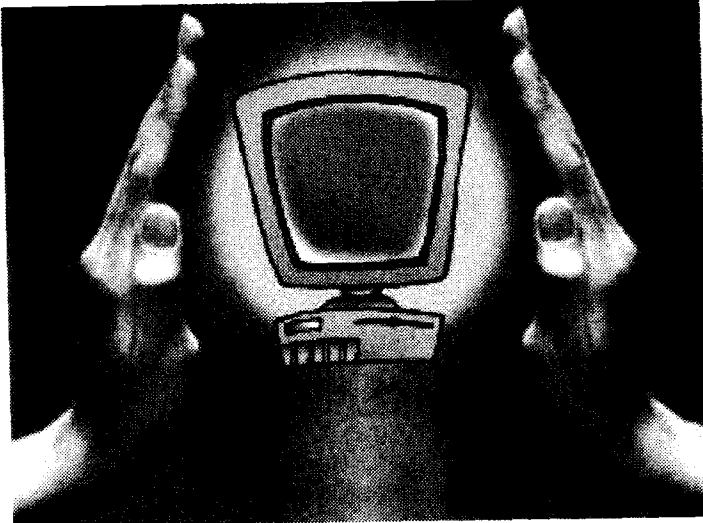
Transactions on the net would involve various kinds of liability, namely, contractual liability, tortious liability and statutory liability. Intellectual property violations are rampant online and an aggrieved party will often find that he has insufficient information regarding the infringing party or the infringer has little or no recoverable assets.

Intellectual property owners will often seek to recover damages against the internet service provider (ISP) or web site host where the copyrighted materials and trademark wrongfully appear. It can be difficult, if not impossible, for an ISP host with thousands of customers to monitor the content of each of its customer pages for potential copyright or trademark infringement. Besides, in most jurisdictions, including India, the law limits the liability

of an ISP to a great extent.

Cyberspace presents unique challenges to risk managers for several reasons, the foremost being, that there is no standard risk profile. The wide variety of internet-related businesses, such as ISPs, content aggregators, certification authorities, online merchants and software developers, all contribute

company's premises; brand name and service mark protection; and active and passive security risks. (where an active security risk will relate to the false data representation either by way of change or creation of false data and a passive security risk would result when people see data not intended for them). Enacting appropriate insur-



to the difficulty of developing a single risk profile. The challenge for any insurance agent or broker in an evolving industry like this is realised in identifying the exposure and minimizing the risks. Primarily internet related risks are classified as direct risks (peril to the company's own assets and operations) and liability risks (third party claims and lawsuits).

When determining an e-businesses overall internet-related exposure, insurers should consider the following aspects: necessary technical component, and configuration for peak security; procedures to maintain a secure internet environment over time; known perils such as hacker attacks, data manipulation, and unauthorized users; methods for proving incidents in a digital environment; an internet risk assessment and site-certification process; loss of computer records or damage to computer systems; illegal cyber threats or extortion; theft, damage, disappearance or loss of e-commerce goods in transit from the

ance policies for ensuring cover for security issues, and intellectual property rights issues is vital. As e-commerce involves distance selling, insurance covers become necessary and relevant for a company, which wants to set up and trade on its web site. For safe business transactions, what is needed is a secure legal environment, and while legislation in India is providing this environment with the enacting of laws dealing with the internet, insurance companies in India should provide comprehensive protection policies for a business against web-related risks, such as hackers and viruses, credit card and employee fraud, business interruption losses and legal action.

Essentially, the policy can fill the gaps in coverage that have opened up between standard insurance policies due to the fact that the way business is done has changed. From a company's perspective, the principal exposures a company should consider while conducting its business on the

internet may be categorized as follows:

Intellectual property infringements: Content providers who use content of others without permission can trigger these risks.

Errors and omissions liability: These risks are triggered typically by programmers, web hosts and web designers who, through negligence in their work cause injury/damage to a third party.

Personal injury and advertising liability: As e-commerce grows, these risks can be triggered by worldwide web sites, and trade publishers who publish illegal content or content which may be construed as libel.

Directors liability: Directors and officers often face the risk of litigation due to number of factors, such as consumer protection laws, securities related laws, and certain provisions in the corporate laws that place additional responsibilities on directors.

Employee liability: These risks would typically arise from breach of confidentiality and rights of privacy arising out of confidential client information stored on a particular system or web site. In addition, employees can initiate sexual harassment charges from an employee due to disturbing e-mail content.

Legal fees: Fees incurred for litigation arising out of various claims, such as intellectual property. Many businesses on the internet mistakenly think their internet-related exposures are covered by their existing policies. The fact is that there are gaps in standard property and casualty policies that would prevent e-commerce entrepreneurs from banking on their policies. This, however, has not gone unnoticed by risk managers or the insurance industry.

Therefore, the insurance industry is rolling out an array of products specifically designed to provide coverage for a wide range of electronic media. Coverage most likely to be developed first includes errors and omissions, media liability and intellectual property infringement liability. In addition to this, conducting business online

entails many legal uncertainties, especially when business is conducted internationally. How the law addresses third-party liability is especially unclear. The global aspect of the internet exposes businesses to cross-border liability, and the likelihood of an online business accidentally breaking a foreign country's laws can be high. For example, an Indian company may use comparative advertising on the worldwide web, not knowing that such practices are prohibited in Germany and France. The major sources of liability include creation, manipulation and dissemination of content, service failures, and development, use and sale of enabling technology. Other risks include loss of mission-critical applications, unauthorised use of confidential information, failure to protect intangible property, mistakes in online advertising and errors in software design.

In India, new and current players in the local insurance industry can use the new e-space in order to widen their corporate dossier. The key to effective security is to establish procedures to safeguard systems, educate employees on their roles and responsibilities related to security, create a mechanism to provide continuous monitoring to make sure security procedures are followed and take appropriate actions to enforce compliance with the procedures. The government has taken the initiative by framing the Information Technology security guidelines for the Information Technology Act, 2000. These rules lay down in great detail, the steps a company should take in maintaining security for its e-commerce related data and systems.

Insurance companies in India should offer coverage for internet risks, either in the form of endorsements or as stand-alone internet insurance products. What would greatly benefit entrepreneurs would be if they identified how developments in e-commerce will affect their business and to formulate a plan to protect against possible loss.

Courtesy: Majmudar & Co

Dam the controversy ⁹⁶⁶

Get down to maximising the benefits of the Narmada project

ONE of the most bitter and high-profile controversies the country has ever witnessed will hopefully come to an end with the Supreme Court having waved the green flag vis-a-vis the Sardar Sarovar project. While this may occasion a sense of vindication in some — certainly this newspaper has always positioned itself in favour of the project — the enormity of the task at hand demands a unified and immediate response from the nation, not crass displays of self-congratulation. Time is of the essence here since the project has been practically stalled since 1995, and every hour of delay pushes up costs dramatically. It should be with a sense of relief and utmost urgency that the nation now turns its attention to the crucial job of ensuring that the benefits of the Narmada Valley Project, of which the Sardar Sarovar dam comprises a part, reaches the people it is meant for, just as all the necessary measures for relief and rehabilitation are undertaken for the large numbers affected by the project.

Indeed, if the energy that Medha Patkar's Narmada Bachao Andolan put into stopping the project is now channelised into maximising its gains and minimising its negative impact, it would earn the nation's gratitude. The apex court's verdict, in response to writ petitions filed by the Narmada Bachao Andolan and others, was not a unanimous one. Yet, the prevailing view of the Court was that the construction of the dam should continue "as per the award of the tribunal", with the one rider that the "cost economics of the project" be kept in mind. Also, while it allowed the height of the dam to go up to 138 metres, it specified that every stage

of construction from the 90 metre level can only proceed after obtaining proper sanction from the concerned authorities, both in terms of environmental impact and rehabilitation.

One of the most powerful arguments that those agitating against this project had raised was of shabby rehabilitation. It was this issue, more than any other, that had prompted the Morse Commission, set up by the World Bank in 1991 to review the project, to recommend the Bank pulling out of it. The higher the dam, the greater the numbers displaced and therefore the issue needs to be handled with greater sensitivity and meticulousness than the three governments of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have displayed thus far. There is another issue that bears reiteration here and that concerns the sharing of the Narmada waters in Gujarat. Thus far, the Gujarat government has drawn on the emotional resonance of endemic drought in the state — especially water scarcity in Saurashtra and Kutch — to buttress its arguments in favour of the Sardar Sarovar dam. Now it should redeem its commitment by ensuring that the Narmada waters do reach these parched regions, instead of merely benefitting the prosperous farming communities in southern Gujarat, who don't have to wrestle with the spectre of parched fields year after year. The struggle to secure this project has thrown up numerous issues that needed to be discussed in the public sphere. The insights that have emerged from this process should help the country handle future projects of this kind more effectively.

INDIAN EXPRESS

19 OCT 2000

Texas Governor Bush stuck to broad themes while the Vice-President sought to outline specifics, feel analysts

Gore comes out swinging in final debate

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
WASHINGTON, OCT 18

DEMOCRATIC presidential nominee Al Gore came out swinging against Republican rival George W. Bush in a spirited televised debate that highlighted sharp differences of style and vision three weeks before what is expected to be a very close election.

In marked contrast with their two previous televised encounters earlier this month, Vice-President Gore and Texas Governor Bush staked out sharply divergent positions on a wide range of domestic issues, including healthcare, education, role of the government and tax cuts. Tuesday's 90-minute, town hall-style debate, in which the two rivals faced a volley of questions from voters at Washington University in St Louis, Missouri, was the last of this year's presidential campaign. It could prove crucial in influencing undecided voters prior to the November 7 ballot.

Bush, who headed into the de-

READ MY LIPS FOREIGN POLICY

on our timetable... We can't put the Middle East peace process steady. When we say we are somebody's friend, everybody has got to believe it." Israel would remain a friend if he wins the election, he added.

Gore: "I see a future when the world is at peace, with the United States of America promoting the values of democracy and human rights and freedom all around the world."

GUN CONTROL

Bush: "I believe law-abiding citizens ought to be allowed to protect themselves and their families. I believe that we ought to keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. That's why I'm for instant background checks at gun shows. I'm for trigger locks."

Gore: "I think that some common-sense gun safety measures are certainly needed with the flood of cheap handguns that have sometimes been working their way into the hands of the wrong people. But all of my proposals are focused on that problem: gun safety. None of my proposals would have any effect on hunters or sportsmen or people who use rifles."

tic Party media strategist Raymond Strother, also speaking on public television. "He was sort of Commander Gore, he commanded George Bush, he commanded the stage and I thought he used the audience effectively." Gore was specific, sharp, and Bush muddled and stumbled," Strother said.

Republican media strategist Greg Stevens disagreed. "The American people don't want an attack dog for president, and we saw the old Al Gore attack dog back again," he said. "I think people want someone who's likeable and who they can trust, and certainly Governor Bush scored very well on those points." Bush, however, peppered his answers with stock phrases from his stump speeches and even repeating — almost verbatim — statements that he made in previous debates, focusing on being "a uniter, not a divider" and continuing to emphasise that he was not a "Washington insider".

Gore moved up to the front to be in close contact with the people asking questions, while Bush rarely got close to the public. Gore was as-

sertive, at times forceful in his answers: "If you want someone who will fight for you and who will fight for middle class families and working men and women... then I want to fight for you," he said, addressing members of the audience directly on a healthcare question.

Gore is "always best when he's behind... he's out there charging like a tiger," said commentator David Gergen, Editor of *US News and World Report*. Bush, by contrast, "was the sleepest I've seen him in these debates. I thought he was off tonight. It almost seemed at times from his body language as if he were sitting on his lead."

Predictably, the two vice-presidential candidates came out in favour of their man after the debate. "America is headed in the right direction. Al Gore... has the record to show that he is the one to keep the prosperity going," Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman told CNN. "I thought Governor Bush did a superb job tonight," former defence secretary Dick Cheney told CNN. "He focused on the broad philosophical differences between the two campaigns."

Bush often stood back with his hands clasped together when Gore spoke. Gore stood with his arms to his side, sometimes with a hand in his pocket, often looking directly at Bush. Many analysts had criticised Gore for being too overbearing in the first debate on October 3, and too meek in the following debate a week later.

"On Tuesday, Gore commanded the stage," said Democrac-

The two leading presidential hopefuls sat in the centre of a red carpeted arena in a university auditorium facing a semi-circle of "undecided" voters. The questions from the audience overwhelmingly focused on domestic issues, and the candidates' delivery — as well as their ability to connect with the audience — was clearly as important as the answers themselves.

bate with a slight lead in several polls, stuck to his stump speech broad-themes, while an aggressive Gore sought to outline specifics, analysis said here. "Gore was certainly more assertive, more in command of his facts, but I think Governor Bush was in command of his message and he never forgot that message," said presidential historian Richard Norton Smith.

Graphic by VINEY

Maharashtra and Rajasthan rejoice

SC ruling hailed

HT Correspondents
Mumbai/ Jaipur, October 19

RAJASTHAN IS thirsty, and Maharashtra is short of power. So judgement day brought good news for the two states.

For Rajasthan, which will get approximately half the amount of water that Gujarat was awarded by the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal in 1979, the SC's nod implies they can go ahead with long-pending plans.

The state's Rs 1,200 crore plan to irrigate 2.5 lakh hectares of land, to be serviced by the Narmada's waters, can finally be implemented.

So the mood in the administration and even in the villages is predictably upbeat. The project is slated to be completed by 2004. And once, the Narmada waters actually flow in to Rajasthan a major part of the drinking water problems in districts like Barmer

and Jalore will be solved. It's a real boon for the people in the desert districts" said Gajraj Chaudhry, chief engineer irrigation department.

Maharashtra, on the other hand sees the SC verdict as a step in the direction of solving their power problems. Says Padamsingh Bajirao Patil, minister for Irrigation & Energy: "The State of Maharashtra has been witnessing power shortage in the range of 1,200-1,500 mega watts per day, which results in load shedding for about 8 hours a day in village areas.

"The Supreme Court judgement Narmada and the increase in the height would help in meeting our power shortages in village areas," the Minister said

But both the state governments could be counting their chickens a trifle prematurely. The SSP, remember, was originally supposed to be complete this year.

ACCLAIMING THE SC judgement on Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), planning expert Y K Alagh expressed the hope that it would bring about an era of accelerated development in the country.

"It is a blessed day. On a day when such developments regarding the Sardar Sarovar have taken place, one can say that maybe we are approaching the end of the dark tunnel," he said referring to the long-pending case in court which had held up work on the river valley project.

Speaking at a function where a report, Water Vision 2025, was formally released, he pointed out that one could not envisage the future development of India without talking of development of its water resources. Such a vision would involve development of rivers, river valleys and inter-basin transfers as well as setting up of big and small dams, he stated.

Coming in the wake of yesterday's SC judgement, the function was marked by an air of jubilation and relief among the attending experts, planners and government officials associated with the water sector.

HTC, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 OCT 2000

Madhya Pradesh saddled with problems, stands to gain least

Ramesh Shankar
Indore, October 19

HPIB 20/10

IF YOU were to increase the height of an ordinary 22-storey building by two metres (the height of a tall man), chances are that it would go unnoticed. But the giant Sardar Sarovar Dam is a very different kind of building. It is more than a kilometre long; a concrete leviathan that stems the flow of the Narmada in Madhya Pradesh, and anything you do with it creates waves. The Supreme Court's decision to allow the dam to go up by just six feet has done just that. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) has called the verdict "illogical, dangerous and anti-people". But it is the tribals of Jhabua who will have to bear the unfortunate consequences. The massive Sardar Sarovar reservoir will swell with the addition of the two extra metres, swallowing the settlements on its banks. Result: 10,000 people will be displaced or affected.

Of the four states who have collaborated on the dam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, MP stands to gain the least. Yet it is saddled with most of the dam's problems: 193 of the 245 villages that face submergence are in the state. So it came as no surprise when the SC observed that while rehabilitation and resettlement work in Gujarat and Maharashtra was satisfactory, Madhya Pradesh was lagging behind.

Chief minister Digvijay Singh has said that he doesn't have the land to rehabilitate the oustees. The government also has the difficult job of resettling them so that "they either maintain or improve" their standard of living.

About three thousand people have already settled in Gujarat, the NBA claims that many have come back because the land, ironically for evictees of an irrigation project, is too arid. The Narmada Valley Development Authority is developing 27 rehabilitation sites in Dhar and Barwani districts for about 4,000 oustees. The government is also decided to cut a few corners. Says NVDA director S.S. Uppal: "The government has decided to reduce grazing land from 5 per cent to 2 per cent, the rest will be earmarked for rehabilitation."

The MP government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court asking that the proposed height of the dam be reduced to 436 feet from 455 feet.

This would spare thousands of tribal subsistence farmers the prospects of displacement. It would also save large tracts of forest land.

That petition is yet to be heard. But the message from the Supreme Court is loud and clear. The three-judge bench ruled 2-1 in favour of the dam being built to its full height of 138 mts (455 feet). Leaving only a window of opportunity for those opposed to it.

The dam: Its original cost was pegged at Rs 6,000 crore at 1986-87 prices. A revision five years later put it at 13,130 crore. Now the government says it might cost 18,000. But authoritative estimates by the World Bank made as many as seven years back said the SSP would cost \$ 11.4 billion or Rs 50,000 crore. That money could run the Indian Railways for five years.

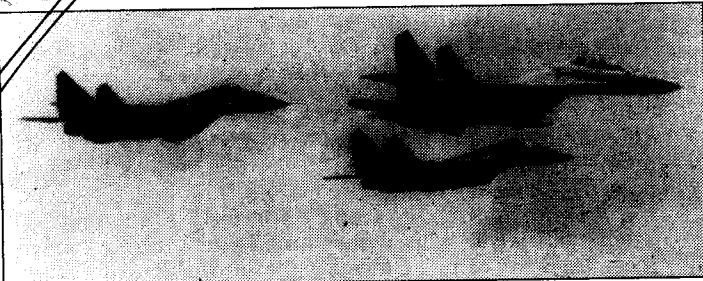
THE POWER



At full capacity the SP will produce 1450 MW of power, which is about two thirds of what Delhi consumes at peak hours. If you were to build a power plant that produces 1 MW of hydel power, you'd have to spend Rs 6 crore. And if you wanted to put it to use, to transmit and distribute it would cost you a further Rs 6 crore. Lighting up villages with power generated by the SSP will therefore take another Rs 9,000 crore.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 OCT 2000



A Sukhoi-30 being escorted by two MiG-29s at an air display to mark the introduction of the SU-30 in the Indian Air Force. — PTI (file photograph)

As the Indian Air Force enters this millennium, it is faced with the daunting prospect of bloc obsolescence of much of its combat fleet. To prevent this and considering the stringent financial constraints under which it functions, the Air Force needs to embark on an urgent programme of limited purchases and major upgrades of its existing combat aircraft.

In a 1996 military agreement with Russia, the IAF purchased 40 SU-30 multi-role combat aircraft, to be delivered in batches, each more advanced than the previous one. The final versions were to be delivered in 2000-2001.

This aircraft's final version, SU-30MK1, is to have thrust-vectoring engine nozzles, canards, state-of-the-art avionics, including a phased array radar among other advanced features. All aircraft in earlier batches are to be upgraded to this standard.

The vital aircraft programme has been considerably delayed — in the selection of non-Russian avionics — by the DRDO and the IAF. The chaos in Russia also contributed to the major slippage. Only 18 SU-

30s have been delivered. In late 1998, India purchased 10 SU-30s originally destined for Indonesia. These bring the total number of aircraft on order to 50.

The defence ministry is also examining the possibility of licence manufacture of this aircraft by HAL. But that depends on whether the IAF wants to or can afford more than two squadrons and whether it is cost-effective for HAL to manufacture such a small number of SU-30s in India.

Although it was stated at Aero India '98 that a licence production agreement would soon be signed, the status of the negotiations is uncertain. But the 1996 agreement does provide for the assembly of 60 more SU-30s in semi or complete knocked down kit form by HAL and the manufacture of critical spares and sub-assemblies in India.

The IAF's 18 SU-30s have entered service with No 24 squadron (Hunting Hawks) which is also the operational conversion unit for this aircraft. The IAF Su-30s are to be equipped with advanced air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles. The IAF aircraft have been seen with the IR R-73 "Archer" and SARH R-27R besides the R-27ER "Alamo" air-to-air missiles. It is learnt that the aircraft can carry the new active radar R-77 "Adder" missiles.

These aircraft reportedly will also be able to carry the Russian Kh-25, Kh-31 and Kh-59 series of air-to-surface missiles. While the latter have not been seen yet on IAF's SU-30s, it is known that the Air Force does operate these missiles or has them on order. Much of the advanced avionics, air-to-surface weapons delivery software or weapons systems for these aircraft have not yet been integrated.

As a result, the SU-30s delivered to date are merely empty shells of the combat aircraft they were intended to be. One hopes the IAF is trying to rectify these shortcomings. In the cold reality of military capabilities, success is measured by deploying fully operational weapons systems and not by spectacular flight displays or media hype.

After 25 years, the IAF is beginning to embrace and invest in force-multiplier technologies such as airborne early warning, air refuelling and electronic counter measures. The IAF's future depends on them.

The Air Force is also finally set to acquire Airborne Early Warning aircraft. For many years, the Bangalore-based Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS) has been developing the radar and the computer software for an indigenous

Combat bloc obsolescence

AEW system mounted on HS-748 airframes.

With the severe limitations imposed by the low performance of the HS-748 airframe, CABS was able to achieve a detection range of 200 km and track 50 targets simultaneously. CABS may now have reached the stage where it can transfer this technology into a fully operational system. The recent delivery of a fully operational Beriev A-50 "Mainstay" AEW aircraft, ostensibly to participate in air exercises, has allowed the IAF to evaluate its capabilities under realistic operational conditions. But this aircraft has reportedly not met the Air Force's technical requirements.

Probably, the IAF will acquire AEW aircraft based on the airframe of the Russian IL-76. It comprises the Israeli Phalcon AEW radar system integrated, perhaps, with a variety of Indian avionics.

How efficiently all these assorted and cosmopolitan avionics and electronics can be integrated is the 64million-dollar question! The initial IAF requirement is for three to five AEW aircraft.

Another priority for the IAF is in flight air-refuelling. It is believed that the IAF is purchasing between four and six IL-78 "Midas" tankers from Kazakhstan.

The MiG-21bis upgrade programme involves an initial 125 aircraft, with an option of another 50. It is based on the MiG bureau's MiG-21-93 programme.

The IAF's first upgraded MiG-21 made its first flight in Russia in October 1998. The Indian MiG-21 upgrade includes a Russian Phazotron Kopyo (Spear) multi-mode pulse-doppler radar, French Totem 221G ring-laser gyro inertial navigation system and multi-function flat panel cockpit displays.

The upgrade also involves integrating Israeli flare dispensers and Indian radio equipment, radar warning receivers and active electronic warfare jammers.

The armament fit will include R-73 and R-77 air-to-air missiles, KAB-500Kr TV-guided bombs, Kh-25, Kh-29 and Kh-31 air-to-surface missiles.

The IAF's other MiGs are also to be upgraded. The MiG-29 is to be fitted with the R-77 air-to-air missiles and an avionics upgrade along the lines of the MiG-29SMT will probably be undertaken. The MiG-23BNs are to be fitted with a wider variety of air-to-surface ordnance.

The Mirage 2000 has received augmented night-strike capabilities, an enhanced EW suite and new flare dispensers. It may receive a radar upgrade at a later date.

The Air Force is planning a more extensive upgrade programme for its Jaguar and MiG-27 fleets. With similar combat roles, much of the avionics, sensors and cockpit displays can be standardised for

Much of the Air Force's current problems have sprung from its penchant for acquiring different types of aircraft for the same function. This Disneyesque collection in its inventory creates a logistics burden, says HIRAK CHOUDHURI

both these aircraft, thereby easing the Air Force's maintenance burden.

The Jaguars, of which about 150 have been ordered to date, have been fitted with Israeli Raphael "Litening" navigation and targeting pods which combine laser designation and thermal imaging. It is intended to standardise a MIL-STD 1553B digital databus on all operational aircraft.

Avionics upgrades include a SBU-84 ring-laser gyro inertial navigation system with embedded GPS, a digital map generator (replacing the present mechanical one).

Enhanced night-flying capability will be provided with a wide-angle holographic HUD, with a 30x22 field of view linked to an FLIR and other electro-optical sensors.

It would seem most probable that the cockpit displays are to be compatible with the use of night vision goggles. Other planned modifications include a new multi-sensor reconnaissance pod, a self-protection jammer and a new RWR.

As the Air Force is expecting to keep its MiG-27 operational until at least 2020, a comprehensive upgrade programme is planned for this aircraft.

The avionics upgrade will integrate an MIL-STD 1553B equivalent digital databus with two multi-function flat panel cockpit displays, digital mission computer, ring-laser gyro inertial navigation system with embedded GPS (SBU-84), a digital map generator and a new wide-angle head-up display, jam-resistant communications system with stand-by UHF, a new digital datalink and an advanced electronic warfare suite and additional sensors such as a Vicon reconnaissance pod, FLIR, a laser designation pod and an in-flight refuelling probe.

New weapons such as the BL 755 cluster bomb and a wide variety of missiles — the Kh-31 family has been mentioned — will also be fitted. The modified MiG-27 may have the option to carry the podded Komar radar which will dramatically enhance the aircraft's flexibility in such disparate roles as anti-shiping strike and air defence.

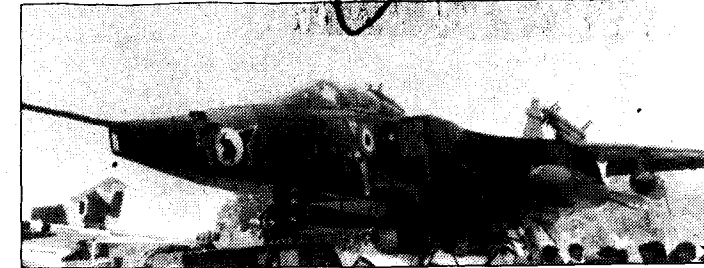
All these upgrades will take time and delays are to be expected. It is unlikely that the

MiG-21 upgrade will be completed before 2005, a programme slippage of over three years. The upgrades for the other MiGs, Mirages and Jaguars will be completed later.

In view of the dangerous proliferation and deployment of ballistic missiles among some of India's neighbours, a new and technically demanding air defence task for the IAF is slowly emerging — Ballistic Missile Defence.

India is planning to order a small number of SA-12 "Gladiator" (S-300) anti-ballistic missile systems from Russia. The plan is to integrate these missiles with our own "Akash" surface-to-air missile, to produce a two-tier ATBM screen for a few select sites, starting with Delhi. This system will take years to come into existence but the acquisition of the S-300 will boost India's air defence capability.

Undoubtedly, the initial batch of S-300s will be deployed to protect the Indian capital. It is



A Jaguar fighter aircraft on display. The Air Force is planning a more extensive upgrade programme for the Jaguar fleet.

also possible that the IAF may opt to wait for its own "Akash" system and then integrate it with some aspects of S-300 technology to extend the range, ceiling and target acquisition and engagement capability of the "Akash".

But it must be stressed that such a hybrid ATBM system is still some way over the horizon and will take years to come into existence, let alone be ready for operational deployment. The escalating costs of purchasing new combat aircraft and its ancillary equipment, along with the huge delays in the LCA programme have compelled the IAF to invest heavily in upgrading older combat aircraft in the Air Force inventory.

This is due not so much to good planning but rather "force majeure".

Much of the IAF's current problems have occurred because of its long-lasting penchant for acquiring different types of aircraft for the same combat function.

This Disneyesque collection of combat aircraft currently in its inventory creates a logistics burden and deprives the service of all the benefits of standardisation and rationalisation.

The IAF lives, after a fashion, but it just can't seem to learn!

(The author is a professional engineer, who comments on defence-related matters)

States failed to provide security to Rajkumar: SC

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu's plea of violence against Tamils rejected

HT Correspondent
New Delhi October 19

THE SUPREME Court today cited the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Governments' negligence in providing security to Rajkumar to squarely on the two States if something happened to the film-star held captive by Veerappan.

A three-judge bench comprising Justice S.P. Bharucha, Justice D.P. Mohapatra and Justice Y.K. Sabharwal also rejected the Governments' plea that there could be a backlash against Tamils in Karnataka if any harm was done to Rajkumar.

Indicating that at the moment it was not inclined to endorse the States' moves for the release of Veerappan's associates, the Court again took note of their joint failure to apprehend the brigand and his gang for the past 10 years.

"Can it be said that for two-and-a-half months the State is faced with a possibility of riots?" Justice Bharucha asked the Karnataka Government. Sharing the same view, Justice Sabharwal queried whether any mob violence was beyond the Government's control.

The Court questioned the very basis of the respondent Govts' belief that Veerappan was willing to free the hostages in exchange of his associates even if it meant giving up on other demands like second language status for Tamils in Karnataka.

"What is the guarantee that the release of Veerappan's associates

from jails will produce Rajkumar and that the brigand will no longer be a threat to people?" the Court noted. It observed that the release package sought to be implemented was pre-arranged.

"The attempt by the Government, the public prosecutor and the Court was to hood-wink the law. It was a knee-jerk panic reaction," Justice Bharucha said.

Representing Karnataka, Solicitor General Harish Salve argued that the Government's decisions on maintenance of public order and security were not amenable to judicial review in the obtaining situation. The bench made it clear that it was only concerned about the proposed release of Veerappan's associates.

Senior counsel K.Parasaran, who also represented Karnataka, said that should anything happen to Rajkumar, the State will be rocked by severe unrest. To that, Justice Bharucha responded by observing: "It is for you to solve the problem."

The Court came down heavily on the Tamil Nadu Government for not providing security cover to Rajkumar when he had gone to his farmhouse. "What prevented you from placing few policemen there?" it asked senior counsel U.R.Reddy. However, the counsel informed the Court that Rajkumar had neither informed Karnataka or Tamil Nadu about his arrival at the new house. He shared Karnataka's concern that there could be outbreak of violence against Tamils.

HT Correspondent
Chennai, October 19

NOW THAT the Supreme Court has firmly ruled out releasing any of the prisoners identified by Veerappan, the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments continue to find themselves in a cleft-stick and the fate of Dr Rajkumar continues to hang more precariously.

With the case adjourned to October 30 the two governments will have no option but to send back the emissaries to plead with Veerappan hoping that the Supreme Courts obstinacy would compel Veerappan to come down. Mr Nedumaran and others may appeal to Veerappan's better sense to see reason arguing that releasing Rajkumar could earn him some sympathy and even support but harming him would only see the two States and its people turning against him forever.

But some of the court's observations should come as a slap on the face of the two governments, particularly the DMK Government for its complacent approach on the Veerappan front. By holding the two governments squarely responsible for any harm that might descend on Dr Rajkumar and faulting the Tamil Nadu police for not providing him constant protection during his stay at Gajanur the court has highlighted the Karunanidhi Government's kid-glove treatment of Veerappan.

The court appeared to be echoing AIADMK leader Ms Jayalalitha's observation on Thursday that the Karunanidhi Government was responsible for Veerappan's resurgence and his ganging up with Tamil extremists.

She pointed out how his gang had been reduced to just five people but now had gained in strength due to Karunanidhi's decision to restrain the STF operations against Veerappan.

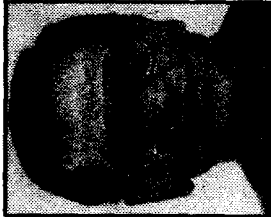
Krishna gives clean chit to Karunanidhi

HT Correspondent
Bangalore, October 19

IN AN attempt to nip the growing controversy in sending Tamil nationalist leader Nedumaran as co-emissary to negotiate with bandit Veerappan, Karnataka Chief Minister S M Krishna today gave a clean chit to his Tamil Nadu counterpart M Karunanidhi's efforts to get the hostages released safely.

Without directly agreeing or disagreeing with Mr Karunanidhi's statement that Mr Nedumaran was sent with the approval of the Karnataka Government, Mr Krishna in a statement said, "We considered it prudent not to come in the way of any initiative taken by Tamil Nadu Government in our anxiety to ensure the early and safe return of Dr. Rajkumar and the other hostage".

Mr Krishna was forced into a tight spot after Congress president Sonia Gandhi at a rally in Raichur yesterday said Mr Nedumaran and the other Tamil nationalist emissaries other than Nakkeeran Gopal were sent to negotiate by Tamil Nadu and had



nothing to do with the Karnataka Government.

The Chief Minister this evening after consultations with Home Minister Mallikarjun Kharge issued a carefully-worded reaction that took care not to rub Mr Karunanidhi on the wrong side while at the same time appearing not to contradict Ms. Gandhi.

In the statement, Mr Krishna said, "Right from day one, when Dr. Rajkumar was abducted we have made it clear that we are depending heavily on the Tamil Nadu Government for the safe release of him and other hostages".

"We are convinced that Dr. Karunanidhi and his government are making sincere efforts and taking necessary steps to get the hostages released safely. A number of people from both Karnataka and outside have met me and offered help to get Dr. Rajkumar and other hostages released safely," the Chief Minister said, adding that Karnataka did not think it prudent to come in way of any initiative taken by Tamil Nadu.

BJP agenda differs from that of RSS, says Bangaru Laxman

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: BJP president Bangaru Laxman has declared that the ruling NDA coalition under Prime Minister Vajpayee's leadership is committed to the principles of secularism. The statement emphatically repudiates home minister L.K. Advani's view on the influence of the RSS on the government, signalling the widening divide between hardliners and liberals in the party.

"The BJP follows its own agenda, which is significantly different from that of the RSS," Mr Laxman said. The statement, made in Punjab but released by party headquarters here, is being seen by observers as having originated in Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital where the PM is convalescing after his knee surgery.

Analysts say the timing and the tone of the statement make it a concerted bid to undo some of the damage done by Mr Advani's pointed views on government-RSS relations, especially as the Opposition parties have been calling on the NDA's partners to break away from the coalition on the secularism issue. On another plane, the statement is yet another salvo fired in the worsening proxy war between the Advani and the Vajpayee camps.

Aimed at removing any misgivings about the direction and guidelines of the coalition government, Mr Laxman maintained, "The approach of fairness and non-discrimination has characterised the working of the NDA government under the leadership of Prime Minister Vajpayee and

CHECK-MATES



Bangaru Laxman



K. Sudarshan

has earned it the goodwill and appreciation of people of all communities."

The BJP chief, at the same time, sought to distance the party from the RSS especially in the context of the latter's recent views on Muslims and Christians.

"I wish to state categorically that what Sudarshan had said about Christians and Muslims in India are the views of the RSS, they do not represent the views of the BJP," Mr Laxman said, making it clear that the

Sangh chief's recommendations for 'Indianising' the two religions would have no bearing on the functioning of the Vajpayee government.

Sources in the party see Mr Laxman's statement as an intervention by the PM under pressure from the allies. The alliance partners had made it clear on several occasions in the past that they would neither defend the BJP nor support it in the face of flak from the Opposition on the RSS issue.

The sharp tone of the BJP chief's statement and his differences with the RSS supremo are itself seen as unprecedented. "The RSS chief is entitled to his views and it is up to the different sections of our diverse society to react to these views as they deem right," Mr Laxman said.

Mr Laxman's statement has acquired a special significance as he had recently given a call for a new deal between the BJP and Muslims. The RSS chief's latest pronouncements have been perceived as a repudiation of the BJP's new policy of winning over the Muslims

THE LAXMAN REKHA

- Bangaru counters Advani's stand on RSS relations
- Statement threatens to widen divide between Vajpayee, Advani camps
- RSS chief's position on churches is his own, states BJP president

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 OCT 2000

20 OCT 2000

Palestinians, Israelis clash in UN session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA *AN*
UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 19 —
Palestinians and Israelis have
clashed in an emergency ses-
sion of the United Nations with
Israelis saying that the deliber-
ation in the session might dis-
rupt the effort to put an end to
violence in West Asia.

Addressing the emergency ses-
sion of the UN General
Assembly yesterday, Palestinian
UN observer Mr Nasser Al-
Kidwa said it would be a "very
dangerous development" if
"rumours" that Israeli security
forces had abducted a number of
Palestinians proved correct.

Mr Kidwa was referring to
reports that Israelis have
abducted a number of Palesti-
nians in connection with
killing of two Israeli soldiers in
Ramallah town last week.

But Israeli ambassador Mr
Yehuda Lancry objected to the
session, requested by the
Palestinians, and said it is con-
trary to the spirit of the decla-

ration of the Sharm-el-Sheikh
summit Mr Lancry said the
deliberations of the Assembly
have the potential of disrupt-
ing the efforts to bring an end
to the violence.

After hearing them and two
other speakers, the Assembly
adjourned the session till
tomorrow when it would hear
secretary-general Mr Kofi
Annan and more than 40 other
member states before taking
up any resolution.

Mr Kidwa said the people
who killed the two soldiers had
"strong reasons" to believe that
they belonged to the "Al-
Mustarbeen unit". Contrasting
the Israeli actions with those of
the Palestinians, Mr Kidwa

stressed that the Palestinian
side did not fire a single bullet
for the first three days of vio-
lence despite the bloody Israeli
campaign. He said that during
the past three weeks, "the
occupying power has killed
more than 90 Palestinians and
injured more than 3,000."

US missile secrets with China

5-3 20/10
translate the huge pile of
secret Chinese documents,
totalling 13,000 pages, until
four years after the agency
obtained them, according to a
senior law enforcement official,
who described the delay as "a
major blunder".

The belated translation and
analysis, has prompted a major
reorientation of the FBI's
investigation into Chinese espie-
nage. From 1996 until late
last year, the FBI probe cen-
tered on the suspected loss of
US nuclear warhead data, and
quickly narrowed into an inves-
tigation of Wen Ho Lee, an eth-
nic Chinese from Taiwan.

Now, however, the FBI, which
never found evidence that Lee

spied for China, has shifted its
focus to the Defence Department
and its private contractors.

The documents were provided
by a "walk-in" defector, sus-
pected to be a double agent as
he had sent some documents by
an American multinational
courier, DHL, and brought
other documents personally.

They show that during the
1980s, Beijing had gathered a
large amount of classified
information about US ballistic
missiles and reentry vehicles.

Thus missile secrets are far
more likely to have come from
US defence officials or missile
builders than from US nuclear
laboratories at Los Alamos and
other labs, the *Post* said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19. —
China has obtained a huge
amount of US missile secrets in
addition to America's inner-
most nuclear weapon classified
information, including those
relating to the building of the
W-88, the most modern nuclear
weapon in the US armoury, a
media report today said.

"There is no denying that
China stole nuclear secrets.
However, the belated new
review of Chinese military doc-
uments provided by a Chinese
defector as early as 1995, has
led US Intelligence agents to
conclude that Chinese espie-
nage has gathered more
American missile technology
than nuclear weapons secrets",
senior US officials told the
Washington Post.

The new conclusion about the
success of Chinese espionage in
obtaining America's missile
secrets as well as secrets of
weapons like the W-88, was
reached only this year because
the CIA and other Intelligence
agency linguists did not fully

Attack before Cabinet swearing-in LTTE suicide bomber strikes in Colombo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, Oct. 19. — An LTTE suicide bomber blew himself up near the Town Hall in Colombo city this morning, injuring at least 24 people, including three American tourists, minutes before President Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga administered the oath of office to the new Cabinet.

Police said that a male suicide bomber, apparently waiting to target a senior politician or military official, blew himself up at 9.30 a.m. IST when policemen attempted to check him.

While the bomber was killed on the spot, a number of policemen and civilians, besides the American tourists travelling in a car, were injured.

The place where the blast took place was strewn with flesh and blood mainly that of the suicide bomber. The head of the bomber was recovered, police said.

One of the injured Americans, who was immediately rushed to the hospital, said she saw a convoy with heavily armed personnel pass through before the

explosion took place.

Three of the five people travelling in the car were injured, she said.

This was the third time in this month, an LTTE suicide bomber missed his intended target and got killed.

Two suicide bombers, one in Colombo and another in Muthur in eastern Trincomalee district, killed themselves during the run up to the 10 October general elections in which over 30 people were killed.

When the blast took place, top leaders of the ruling People's Alliance had gathered at the President's house to take oath as ministers.

The President's house is located about five km from the town hall, where Mrs Kumaratunga had escaped a suicide bomb blast last December, during the presidential polls.

PM warning: The Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Mr Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, today warned the new cabinet of assassination attempts, adds AFP. The Prime Minister said the LTTE could try to blast more bombings.

No progress on Myanmar refugees: UNHCR

THE NATION
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

BANGKOK, Oct. 19. — The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms Sadako Ogata, admitted yesterday that little progress had been made toward a resolution of the Myanmar refugee problem, but said she hoped a pioneering ad hoc mission could be established soon in certain "pacified areas" in the country.

Speaking at a press conference capping her two-day visit to Thailand, Ms Ogata said the matter had been discussed during her recent meeting with Myanmar military leaders.

She said she had proposed the UNHCR be allowed access to areas where fighting had

ceased, such as Mon state, so that the UN could help repatriate refugees to these places. "They did not deny. They did not negate. They said they would examine," she said, adding the junta is still very concerned about security.

"We should be able to be there and see the situation," she said, citing the successful repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh as an example of her agency's work. She said this could be a good start for expansion of UNHCR's presence in eastern Myanmar and hoped it would be allowed within two to three years.

Thailand has vowed to repatriate Myanmar refugees

within three years if the conditions are right, which includes a cessation of fighting and the UNHCR's presence on the other side of the border to ensure the returnees' safety. But the negotiations on the issue have gone nowhere and critics have blasted the junta for its insincerity in solving the problem. Ms Ogata also urged Thai authorities to grant the UNHCR full access to a string of camps along the border to provide the refugees there with proper treatment. During her visit to the Tham Hin temporary shelter in Ratchaburi on Tuesday, Ms Ogata said she was "depressed" by the congestion there and asked for an expansion of the site.

THE STATESMAN

10 OCT 1990

3 die in Lanka suicide bomber attack

HT Correspondent
Colombo, October 19

A SUICIDE bomber of the LTTE, apparently waiting to target senior Sri Lankan politicians and military officials, blew himself up here today, killing two others and wounding 21 including two Americans and a Briton, minutes before President Chandrika Kumaratunga installed her new 44-member Cabinet.

The male bomber detonated explosives strapped to his body this morning as securitymen attempted to frisk him outside Town Hall, about five km from the presidential palace where the swearing-in took place, the police said.

The bomber was killed on the spot while a wounded policeman and a civilian died later at the national hospital, where all the injured including the three Western women were admitted.

The police said the bomber was apparently waiting to target senior military officials as he had strategically placed himself on the road opposite to Town Hall connecting an important intersection.

Senior Superintendent of Police Wijewardene told said that the young bomber, suspected to be an LTTE member, was spotted by beat constables and army men at Green Path, a considerable distance away. Green Path links the residence of the President at



Policemen inspect the site of the bomb blast in Colombo on Thursday. Photo: AP

Liberty roundabout and the office of the Prime Minister on Flower Road. This is the second blast in the Town Hall area, the first occurred on Dec. 18 last year when a female LTTE suicide cadre blasted herself in an attempt to assassinate President Kumaratunga.

In Jaffna, a MI-24 helicopter of the Sri Lankan Air Force crashed landed after it was reportedly shot by the LTTE in Nagarkovil in Jaffna this evening, adds UNI. Reports quoting highly placed Army sources said the helicopter was carrying five crew and all of them here reported to be safe.

Cabinet sworn in: Continuing

past practice, President Kumaratunga has kept the key ministries of defence and finance with herself.

As in the outgoing government, Prof. G.L. Peiris and Lakshman Kadrigamar are minister of constitutional affairs and foreign affairs respectively.

P.K. Balachandran
Colombo, October 19

WHEN ANURA Bandaranaike was elected Speaker of the Lankan parliament on Wednesday, the Bandaranaikes set a world record.

Their's is the only "nuclear" family (comprising father, mother, sons and daughters) in the world to have occupied all the top political posts in the government and parliament of a democratic country.

Every member of the Bandaranaike family has held one or the other of the high constitutional offices, like President, Prime Minister, leader of the Opposition and Speaker of parliament.

Father S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was Prime Minister from 1956 till his assassination by a Buddhist monk in 1959.

Douglas, Zeta-Jones to wed on Nov 18

ACTOR MICHAEL Douglas and his fiancée Catherine Zeta-Jones have finally fixed a date and venue for their wedding - November 18 at the Plaza Hotel in New York.

"It will be a sumptuous party. The invitations have already been sent to our friends," Douglas told a Germany weekly in an interview. Douglas, 56, and Zeta-Jones, 31 have become one of Hollywood's most glamorous couples since their engagement on New Year's Eve last year. **Reuters, Berlin**

The Bandaranaikes set world

In 1960, his wife, Sirimavo, won the general election and became the world's first woman Prime Minister.

In 1965, Sirimavo was ousted, but she was Leader of the Opposition till 1970. Back in power in 1970 she was the Prime Minister for seven years. She lost the 1977 elections badly, but was the leader of the Opposition.

When she was deprived of her civic rights and expelled from parliament, son Anura Bandaranaike took her place as leader of the Opposition.

After the ban on her was lifted in 1988, Sirimavo was back as leader of the Opposition. A disgruntled Anura parted ways with the family in 1993, but only to become minister of higher education in the United National Party (UNP) government.

Sirimavo's second daughter, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, who was in and

out of the "parent" came back to lead tary and president She was the Pr President next. When she beca was made the Priir Anura, however, house. But no Ba office for long.

In a strange devt of South Asia, the Sirimavo's death tr both the governme that the weeping a rehabilitation.

In an unprecede the PM and the lea ly proposed his nam it, the Bandaranaike

INTERNATIONAL

Chinese cyber portal rubs CNN the wrong way

11-18
20/10

The Times of India News Service

BEIJING: A Chinese internet portal partly controlled by Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-Shing's Tom.Com, which has been accused by U.S. cable television giant CNN of cybersquatting, has vowed to "fight to the end", a report said on Thursday.

CNN has sent a legal notice to the Chinese portal, www.cnmaya.com, asking it to stop using its domain name www.cnnews.com before October 16 or face legal action, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* reported. Maya Online, which provides Chinese-language news under that domain name, has rejected the claims in a reply to the American network. It has vowed to "fight to the end" if CNN pursues the claim in court, the paper quoted the semi-official news agency, China News Service.

The assistant general manager of Maya Online, Sun Ji Wei, said cnnews stood for "China News," according to the news agency report.

He said it had nothing to do with www.cnn.com or Cable News Net-

work (CNN), according to the agency.

News channel www.cnnews.com was co-funded by Maya Online, Tom.Com and an information technology firm owned by the Shanghai Municipal Government in East China. The CNN's letter said Maya's domain name "infringes and dilutes our client's rights to the CNN mark."

The letter said the channel adopted the service mark CNN in 1980 to identify its electronic news and information services. It said the U.S. patent and trademark office had granted it numerous registrations for marks containing "CNN".

If Maya failed to respond, the letter said, CNN would pursue all available remedies under anti-cybersquatting provisions of the Consumer Protection Act and file a lawsuit in the U.S. for transfer of the domain name.

China News Service quoted Chinese internet legal experts as saying the claims by CNN were ill-founded. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 OCT 2000

Dancing to the Truck Dhina Dhin tune

Bharat Bhushan
New Delhi, October 19

IT IS disturbing enough that Prasar Bharati is owed Rs. 6.5 crore by a company in which Union Minister Pramod Mahajan's son and wife have a major financial interest.

His son, Mr. Rahul Mahajan is the chairman of the defaulting company - Integral Productions - and the Minister's wife, Mrs. Rekha Mahajan, a director. What is worse is evidence that suggests that Prasar Bharati was manipulated right from the time it accepted Integral Productions' *Truck Dhina Dhin* to the time it was discontinued.

The proposal was cleared in a record time of 72-hours. A noting on the relevant file records that the Officer on Special Duty in the then I&B Minister Pramod Mahajan's office and his Private Secretary had been in touch with Prasar Bharati on the issue.

They pressed the concerned officials to issue the letter to Integral Productions on the very day the proposal was accepted.

Initially the programme was to be telecast on Thursdays between 9.30 pm and 10.30 pm. At the request of the Mahajan company, *Truck Dhina Dhin* was

pushed into the same prime time slot on Wednesday which till then was occupied by a very popular serial *Noorjehan*. Integral Productions claimed that its programme had better viewership than several other programmes. As a consequence, *Noorjehan* was unceremoniously shifted to the Thursday slot.

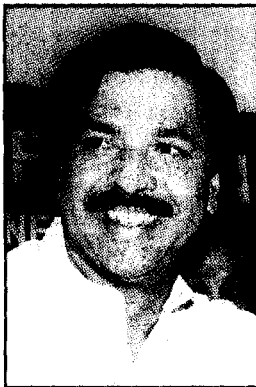
The attempts by Prasar Bharati to recover its dues from the producers and marketers of *Truck Dhina Dhin* seem rather strange.

The ultimate responsibility for paying a minimum guarantee of Rs. 35 lakh per episode lies with the producer, although contracts are signed with both the marketing agency and the production company. Both of them kept deferring payments

to Prasar Bharati but continued to accumulate money from advertisers in their own coffers. Prasar Bharati allowed this to happen for far too long.

The net result was that when the first contract for telecasting 26-episodes of the programme expired, Mr. Rahul Mahajan's company owed Prasar Bharati over Rs. 4 crore. The last of the 26-episodes was telecast on April 5 this year.

However, without a contract,



Continued on Page 8

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 OCT 2000

Civic body to present two budgets under World Bank scheme

HT Correspondent
Calcutta, October 19

THE MORE than two-and-a-half-century-old city's civic authority is set to have two separate budgets in the new millennium. Under World Bank (WB) guidelines, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC) will merge its water supply, drainage and sewerage departments.

"A Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board will be constituted by amalgamating CMC's water supply, drainage and sewerage departments under the World Bank guidelines," said chief engineer (drainage and sewerage) Raghobendra Das. A draft on the proposed board has already been prepared and is being discussed.

The civic authority has been trying to seek a WB loan for improvement of the city's water supply, sewerage and drainage services. An important precondition, however, is to constitute the board. "The board will have a separate budget, with no reliance on CMC's central pool of funds," said Das.

The board has been asked to fend for itself. It will be able to decide the charges for water supply, sewerage and drainage services. "All operational, maintenance costs for existing assets as well as creation of new assets will have to be funded by the board itself. It will not share its

revenue with the other CMC departments," said Das.

A major tenet, as far as water supply charges go, will be—the more you use, the more you pay. "We will have different payment slabs for different users. Slum dwellers will be charged a very nominal amount," said Das.

This is the first time that the civic body, the first ever in the country, constituted by the British in 1727, will have two separate budgets. The Brihanmumbai Municipal

Under World Bank guidelines, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation will merge its water supply, drainage and sewerage departments

Corporation (BMC), however, started the practice of presenting two budgets nearly a decade back.

"We are holding discussions with our three consultants on the proposed loan and a workshop was held today at the American Center," said Mayor Subrata Mukherjee.

Representatives of the three consultants, Western International, Metcalfe Consultants from USA and Stup Consultants from Mumbai met the various "stakeholders"—the Mayor, Mayor in Council, prominent councillors, engineers from CMC, CMDA and the State Irrigation Department today.

The amount of the WB loan is yet to be decided. The bank, however, had sanctioned US \$ 2.5 million in March to hire consultants and prepare a feasibility study. "The proposed board will take shape in six to nine months," said Das.

Raising the dam ^{28/10}

THE SUPREME Court judgment clearing the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam at least has the virtue of removing all legal obstacles to a project whose foundation stone was laid, unbelievably, in 1961. But that does not mean that the agitationists will quietly slip out of sight or that the intense, and often bitter, arguments between pro-dam enthusiasts and their opponents will die down. The sharpness of the reaction by the two high-profile critics of the dam, Medha Patkar and Arundhati Roy, has given enough hint of their determination to carry on their 'struggle'. Although they might not achieve much in practical terms since the project has been cleared, their reference to the 'anti-people' nature of the 'shocking and disgraceful' verdict is suggestive of the deep divide which separates the two sides.

To those who are not emotionally involved in the dispute, it is not easy to come to firm conclusions. The crux of the argument against the dam relates to the problems of displacement and environmental damage. But all development projects attract such criticism. Since an ideal balance between leaving the earth in its original pristine state and the evidently unattractive and often destructive demands of development cannot be found, one has to adjudge which of the two is preferable. The advantage of a big dam is its huge irrigation and power generation potential. Punjab is an example of how a state can attain prosperity as a result of such a project. Little wonder, therefore, that the verdict has been welcomed with considerable elation in Gujarat which expects to be a major beneficiary. To say that only the rich farmers will benefit at the expense of the poor tribals who will lose their land is to give an unwarranted ideological twist to an essential economic issue. It has to be realised that prosperity, notwithstanding its uneven distribution, benefits all and not only one section.

Instead of such arguments, which are undoubtedly useful in a poor country, what is of greater relevance is to ascertain the environmental aspect and the longevity of such gigantic projects. The rehabilitation of displaced persons, despite the 'slackness' of which the Madhya Pradesh Government has been accused, can be expected to be completed after a period of time. But the jury is still out on the two other issues. That the environmental angle remains a cause for concern is evident both from the dissenting judgment and the restriction placed on raising the height of the dam beyond a point unless it is approved of by the environmental and rehabilitation authorities. Perhaps the agitationists will now shift their focus from the oustees to the impact of the dam on nature.

Loaves and fishes

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 OCT 2007

International telephony to be opened up by 2002

Cabinet panel decides to end VSNL monopoly earlier

The Times of India News Service
NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday decided to dismantle yet another state monopoly in the telecom sector and free the international telephone services for private companies.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Mr Vajpayee, decided to end VSNL's monopoly from April 1, 2002, two years ahead of the schedule laid down in the National Telecom Policy.

To compensate the loss of its monopoly status, the CCEA has decided to grant VSNL a licence for national long-distance (NLD) call service as well as a category-A Internet Service Provider (ISP) licence which would allow it to operate all over the country, communications minister Ram Vilas Paswan told reporters after the meeting. VSNL, India's first ISP, operates in six cities at present.

The government has already ended VSNL's monopoly in Internet services, allowing private ISPs to set up their own international gateway and independently access international bandwidth.

The government's decision to end VSNL's monopoly over long-distance international calls comes close on the heels of the opening up of the NLD telephone services

to private companies and the Cabinet's recent decision to convert the department of telecom services (DTS) into a corporation in October.

The opening up of the international calls business is good news for Indian telephone users who can now look forward to a drastic cut in international call charges with the advent of competition.

PACKAGE DEAL

- VSNL gets licence for national long-distance telephony.
- Will be reimbursed entry fee
- Need not furnish bank guarantee
- Revenue sharing waived for five years
- Licence for Internet services all over the country

It is VSNL's monopoly costs and profits which have kept call charges from India high. A one-minute call that originates from the U.S. to India costs a mere Rs 20, while a call made in the reverse direction costs more than Rs 60.

Mr Paswan said that VSNL or any other company wishing to enter the domestic long-distance call business would have to pay a

refundable security deposit of Rs 100 crore and another Rs 400 crore as a guarantee for putting up the necessary network. However, as compensation for its loss, the entry fee paid by VSNL would be reimbursed under another head.

He also added that so long as the government retained a majority stake in VSNL, it need not deposit the Rs 400 crore bank guarantee which is mandatory for other NLD providers.

Like other competitors, VSNL will have to give a portion of its revenue from NLD to the government. But, for the first five years, the amount it pays would be reimbursed under another head.

Mr Paswan further added that MTNL and BSNL will use VSNL for international telephone calls and may agree to give it a share of the new licence fees obtained from new international telephone operators, for two years from April 1, 2003.

However, the sweeping changes in the telecom sector have not come as good news for employees of the state undertakings. Even as the CCEA was meeting, over 300,000 DTS employees began an indefinite strike to back their demands for job security and wage protection.

Cable TV Networks, BSF Bills get President's assent

New Delhi, September 6

MG-11 7/9
PRESIDENT K R Narayanan has given assent to the Cable Television Networks (regulation) Amendment Bill, 2000, seeking to overcome deficiencies in the administration of the principal Act of 1995, as also to the Border Security Force (amendment) Bill, 2000.

The Cable TV Networks (regulation) Amendment Act seeks to bring within the scope of the programme and advertisement codes the free-to-air channels so as to avoid distribution of undesirable programmes to the viewers, an official release here said today. It also defines the authorised officers in the Act itself and empowers Central and State Governments to notify additional authorised officers with the further provision that the distinction between the authorised and specified officers be removed, the release said.

The Act seeks to empower the authorised officers to seize the equipment being used by the cable operators for operating the cable TV network in contravention of its provisions. It also empowers the authorised officers to prohibit any programme or channel if it is not in conformity with the prescribed programme and advertisement codes.

The BSF (amendment) Act seeks to bring the principal Act of 1968 at par with the

Army Act, 1950 to provide for setting off the period of pre-trial detention against the sentence of imprisonment imposed on a person governed by the BSF Act, 1968 it said.

The BSF (amendment) Act implements the direction of the Supreme Court in 1996 to entitle the BSF personnel when subjected to court martial to the benefits of section 428 of Criminal Procedure Code and Section 169A of the Army Act. The Act has come into force with immediate effect, the release said. The Cable TV (regulation) Amendment Act modifies the scope of powers of the Central Government adequately to take immediate corrective measures in the interests of security, sovereignty and integrity of the country, public order, decency and morality.

It also ensures uniform carriage and proper reception of two terrestrial channels of Doordarshan along with one regional language channel through the cable networks so that the subscriber is not deprived of the major channels of the public service broadcaster.

The Act empowers Prasar Bharati to specify by notification the number and name of every Doordarshan channel to be retransmitted by the cable operators in their cable service and the manner of reception and retransmission of such channels, the release said. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 SEP 2000

Strike hits telecom networks

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7. Even as the pro-RSS trade union opted out, telecom services suffered further with cellular operators complaining about the crippling of their services as a majority of the workers belonging to other unions remained on strike for the second day today. Striking workers received moral support from telecom officers who sat on a day's hunger strike to protest against the manner in which the Government was dealing with the biggest corporatisation exercise in Independent India. *HD-1 879*

With an early end to the strike nowhere in sight, the Union Home Ministry, on the request of the Telecom Department, advised the state Home Secretaries and the DGPs to "lend all possible assistance" to meet the situation arising out of the strike.

The Government welcomed the "positive attitude" shown by the Bharatiya Telecom Employees Federation (BTEF) in withdrawing from the strike after intense negotiations late on Wednesday night with the Communications Minister, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, and the Labour Minister, Mr. Satya Narain Jatiya. (The withdrawal

by the BTEF would not affect the strike as they constituted only 35,000 employees, a UNI report said.) In a statement shortly before leaving for Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Paswan regretted the intransigent attitude of the majority federations — the National Federation of Telecom Employees (NFTE) and the Federation of National Telecom Organisations (FNTO) — though their apprehensions had been sorted out across the table to secure them the best financial benefits.

"No demand or suggestion of theirs was ignored or set aside. Instead, every possible effort was made to reach a stable and amicable solution," he observed in a lengthy statement spelling out the stand on issues raised by the two unions. *Media*

On the other hand, the two federations said the Minister was making vague promises and maintained that their strike was very much in the public interest because they had not put forward any pay-related demand. Many demands, specially those related to the financial viability of the proposed corporation and payment of pension as per Government rules had to be endorsed by

the Union Cabinet. "How can a mere assurance by a Deputy Secretary on behalf of Mr. Paswan on such major issues be accepted by us? The employees will remain on strike because they realise that their future is at stake," said a senior NFTE functionary.

However, all is not well within the BTEF which has opted out of the strike. Its leaders are confused over the omission of a crucial word in relation to safeguarding pension payment. "If the clause on reimbursing the shortfall in pension payment is not there in the original agreement signed with the Government, we will protest," said senior BTEF office-bearer, Mr. Suresh Kumar.

Cellular companies said mobile calls were affected and they were inundated with complaints from irate subscribers. The industry estimates that the loss being incurred by the Government alone due to missed calls will be several hundreds of crores per day.

Unions sources said telecom services in several States including Tamil Nadu had started feeling the impact of the strike. While manual services such as trunk booking and fault repair had been on the blink since yesterday, long distance telecom links began going down from today.

Major worry

However, of much worry to the telecom officials is the impact of the stir on the computerised passenger reservation system (PRS) which is connected country-wide with the help of DoT links. Officials fear that the system in many centres would suffer in case the strike continues for another 48 hours.

Reward for falling in line

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7. The Government today offered to pay Rs. 1,000 a month more to those employees who join the newly-formed Bharat Sanchar Nigam limited (BSNL). The Communication Minister, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, said the money would be adjusted against the new pay scales of the corporate entity which would come into effect from October 1. "The corporation would be asked to pay Rs. 1,000 a month on an ad hoc basis to those who join the entity when it comes into existence," an official statement said.

THE HINDU

7 8 SEP 2000

Telecom ^{with} strike ~~is~~ called off

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA 9/9

NEW DELHI, Sept. 8. — More than 300,000 striking workers of telecom unions called off their strike late tonight after reaching an agreement with the government.

"There were some misunderstandings with the federations. Had these been sorted out earlier the strike could have ended amicably much before," the communications minister, Mr Ram Vilas Paswan, said here tonight.

"The employees' interest will remain secure," the minister assured the two striking federations.

Earlier in the day, Mr Paswan told reporters in Bhopal that there was "absolutely no justification for the strike" because the government had accepted most of the demands, adds SNS.

The communications minister said there were "political reasons" behind the strike.

The nationwide strike had been called by various unions of telecom employees on Wednesday after the government decided to corporatise the telecom department.

Addressing a news conference, Mr Paswan said that the government would ensure financial viability for the newly formed Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited.

Mr Paswan said the government had also assured telecom employees that there will be no retrenchment of employees after corporatisation. "Even the services of casual workers in the department have been made permanent," he said.

The government had also agreed to pay an extra Rs 1000 a month to employees who join the BSNL, he said.

THE STATESMAN

Ministry adds more teeth to cable TV rules

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 8. — In a move aimed at stimulating the box office and protecting the film industry, the government today ordered that cable TV operators could only screen programmes over which they either held the copyright or had been authorised to telecast them by the holders of the copyright.

Through other amendments to the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Rules notified tonight, the clearance for screening "adult programmes" between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. has been withdrawn. All programmes, regardless of the schedule of their screening, will have to conform to the code governing decency and good taste.

Announcing the amendment of the rules at a Press conference here this evening, the minister for information and broadcasting expressed the hope that, as in the past, cable operators would voluntarily abide by the revised regulations and penal action would not become necessary. The law did provide for seizure of equipment and prosecution, Mr Arun Jaitley emphasised.

Media 528 9/9

The ban on advertising cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol would cover all channels, not just the encrypted ones said the minister and the rules stated "direct or indirect" which ought to take care of surrogate advertising too. In keeping with the policy to promote breast feeding, the ban will cover infant milk substitutes, baby foods and feeding bottles.

The copyright-related restrictions followed repeated complaints by the Hindi film industry that pirated films were regularly being screened by the cable-operators, affecting their business. This was especially true of newly-released hit films. Now, showing a pirated print would become clearly illegal and operators would invite trouble by screening them.

The revised rules also clamp down on references that hurt religious sentiments. This point was included after protests against an advertisement spot by a TV manufacturer that involved "Draupadi's vastraharan" an incident in the Mahabharata when Draupadi was humiliated by the Kauravas.

The changes in the rules follow Parliament's having recently approved amendments

to the parent legislation to strengthen the administration's ability to counter "unacceptable programming."

According to media experts, though the ban on liquor is high-minded it will strengthen surrogate advertising that will be hard to check. An I&B ministry official conceded that surrogate advertising will increase, saying that was the price to be paid.

Liquor ads have not been shown on Doordarshan and after a pact by the private channels, screened only after 10 pm. A senior private channel official said he would have preferred "self-censorship" as was the case earlier. But the curtailment of ads would not reduce the revenue of the channels by much. According to estimates, it is likely to come down by about 5 to 10 per cent.

The minister expressed the hope that Prasar Bharati would soon notify the three of its channels (one of them terrestrial) that cable operators in each area would have to transmit on their prime bands, as laid down in the amendments to the parent Act that Parliament had cleared in the monsoon session.

THE STATESMAN

9 SEP 2001

India to play second fiddle to US firm

Siddharth Zarabi
New Delhi, September 11

THE CONTROVERSIAL mega information highway project — Sankhya Vahini — may not be controlled by the Indian government. Instead, the single largest stake in the joint venture company Sankhya Vahini India Ltd (SVIL) is being gifted to the US firm IUNet Inc., a wholly held subsidiary of Carnegie-Mellon varsity at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

As per the original proposal, approved by the Union Cabinet in January this year, the Department of Telecom Operations (DTO) was to directly hold 45 per cent, IUNet 49 per cent, the Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) 2 per cent, while educational institu-

tions (IITs Mumbai, Chennai, IISc Bangalore and IIIT Hyderabad) would hold the remaining 4 p.c.

The basic equity structure hasn't been changed, but on September 4, the DTO, in a draft joint venture agreement introduced clever new clauses that spell out the sell-out.

Under the new proposal, the 4 per cent equity to be held by the educational institutions "shall not be deemed to mean the shareholding of the government".

By taking this crucial stake away from the ambit of government control, the agreement seeks to limit the government share to a maximum of 47 per cent — 45 per cent

held by DTO and 2 per cent by the MIT.

Yet another clause ensures that the government, or its undertakings, can never exceed 49 per cent shareholding in the JV. So, if the 4 per cent stake earmarked for the

IITs is not subscribed, the government will have no right to allocate these shares in favour of a party of its choice.

In fact, if the government wants to increase its holding from 45 per cent, directly or indirectly, it will have to seek compulsory consent from IUNet.

Interestingly, current government rules for foreign equity in telecom services like long distance

only allow 49 per cent foreign participation. It is only recently that the Cabinet decided to allow 100 per cent foreign investment in Internet services and e-commerce, albeit with conditions.

Not only has equity been limited by the JV agreement, it seems to have also meekly handed over management control. IUNet and DTO nominees were supposed to take turns chairing SVIL every three years.

However, the chairman for the first three years will be an IUNet appointee.

The fine print says that his term can be extended by another two years.

Effectively, the DTO nominee will take over only after half a decade.

Mega Information Highway Project

HD-13
14/9

Great future for Microsoft in India, says Bill Gates ^{Media}

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13. The Microsoft Corporation Chairman, Mr. Bill Gates, tonight said his company was keen to place India prominently in its future business plans. "There is a great future for Microsoft in India," he said while addressing select businessmen shortly after his arrival.

Speaking at his first public engagement late tonight, Mr. Gates gave a glimpse about Microsoft's advanced new generation of proprietary software-in-the-making "Microsoft.NET". It is a vision that extends the personal empowerment first offered by the PC in the Eighties, Mr. Gates said in his brief after-dinner speech.

Nearly an hour behind schedule, Mr. Gates nevertheless spent time familiarising himself with all the invitees. Heads of upcoming software companies who jostled for an autograph of the IT world's unchallenged czar on their menu cards, also acquainted him with their area of expertise. Some of them are closely collaborating with Microsoft in developing the Microsoft.NET platform. The Nasscom chief, Mr. Dewang Mehta, outlined India's potential in the IT firmament while the India head of Microsoft, Mr. Sanjay Mirchandani, spoke about the company's relationship with the country.

Earlier, Mr. Gates arrived behind schedule from Melbourne under a thick pall of secrecy as company officials refrained from giving details of his itinerary. Mr. Gates will confine his stay in India to a five star hotel and will leave the hotel premises just once tomorrow for a meeting with the Minister of Information Technology, Mr. Pramod Mahajan. He flies back to Australia late tomorrow in order to be in time to witness the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics.

Tomorrow morning Mr. Gates will meet his company's business partners, specially those who are helping Microsoft develop its next software ".Net" which is billed to provide services that today's dot-coms can only dream of.

This will be followed by a meeting with chief ministers where Mr. Gates will unveil Microsoft's new India initiative, "chiefministers-net".

Among those who have confirmed their participation are the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa and Haryana.

Official sources said one-to-one meetings will only be granted to the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu, whose State hosts Microsoft's offshore development center, and the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna.

Mr. Gates' interaction with the media later in the day will be followed by a meeting with the CEO's of IT companies. Among those who are expected to attend are the Infosys chief, Mr. M. R. Narayana Murthy, the Satyam CEO, Mr. Ramalinga Raju, Wipro chief, Mr. Azim Premji, the HCL

Chairman, Mr. Shiv Nadar, and NIFT's Mr. Vijay Thadani and Mr. Rajendra Pawar.

14 SEP 2000

Microsoft to invest \$50 million

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, September 14

MICROSOFT CHAIRMAN and chief software architect Bill Gates today announced major initiatives for India that include a \$50 million investment over three years in its Hyderabad software development facility, expansion of the initiative to develop software in native languages and a strategic alliance with industry leader Infosys Technologies.

Gates also announced a \$5 million grant to the Ministry of Information Technology for promoting information technology education in rural areas and another \$5 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan.

In addition, Gates, who is on his second visit to India in three years announced that Microsoft would triple the size of its development laboratory in Bangalore while upscaling

its development centre in Hyderabad to increase the number of software professionals to 300 from the current 85.

Gates said the development efforts in India "have become the central part of the Microsoft

CMs and the Union Minister for Information Technology Pramod Mahajan, Gates said that he was impressed with the "focus and awareness of Indian politicians on IT".

"After meeting with the Chief Ministers, I am going to take a few lessons from here for US politicians. Indian politicians have impressed me with the innovative ways by which they are planning to use IT in government," he said. Treading ground carefully, the Microsoft chief refrained from naming any one India state as his favourite.

Dispelling the impression that India was attracting global attention because of the "low costs", Gates said: "India has not been the cheapest place and that is how it should be because it then sends a positive message about the quality."

Microsoft will also provide technical inputs to the proposed Media Lab India project, a joint venture between the MIT and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, US.

Related report on Page 16

Windows open to India 2000

- Microsoft's Net initiative in India unveiled.
- MSN.com, an India-specific portal launched.
- Investing \$50 million in Hyderabad development lab.
- \$5 million grant for IT education in rural areas.
- \$5 million personal grant to Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan.
- Worldwide strategic alliance with Infosys.
- To promote Hindi and native language software.

strategy". He also unveiled www.msn.co.in, an India-specific portal using content from over 30 local partners and organised in eight content channels.

Giving a brief account of his meeting with 10

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 SEP 2000

Microsoft to invest \$50 million in India

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14. The Microsoft Corporation chairman, Mr. Bill Gates, today said his company would substantially increase its activities in India.

The company planned to invest at least \$ 50 millions over the next three years in its India-based software development centers and aimed to tie up with more companies for developing its next generation of software and services called ".Net", which, Mr. Gates said, was a "bigger bet than any of the earlier Microsoft initiatives".

He announced the launch of the MSN portal in India with localised content, which would ride on the popularity of its "Hotmail" e-mail services. The portal 'msn.co.in' went live from today.

Mr. Gates said when he had visited the country three years ago, India was just emerging as an IT superpower. His impression during the earlier visit was that "the opportunity for IT in India was incredible" and there was "nothing but optimism" on three counts — more jobs would be created due to proven Indian skills, IT would be increasingly used for improved citizen-Government interface (e-governance), and more companies will rely on Indian expertise.

Opening his media interface by announcing a world-wide alliance with Infosys to develop e-business solutions, he said the pact was not only a "great example of how far both companies have come to tackle ambitious projects of the future" but also a "showcase of things we will do with

Indian companies". Complimenting Infosys for its ability to execute complex projects, he said both companies would constantly invest in this partnership so that the "solutions developed are the most powerful in the market place". Earlier, Mr. Gates held a closed-door meeting with the Minister of Information Technology (MIT), Mr. Pramod Mahajan. "I was impressed by the MIT's plans to increase the number of IT-trained graduates in the country," said Mr. Gates.

Responding to Mr. Mahajan's observations on the need to spread IT among the masses, Mr. Gates said his company too was driven by the desire to expand the language software market.

He also spoke highly of the work being done by his company's development centers here. Following a review of all ongoing projects later in the day, Mr. Gates said the size of the ".Net scalability" lab in Bangalore would be tripled and it would be assigned more projects.

Pledges \$ 5 million aid

PTI, UNI report:

Mr. Gates pledged \$ 5 millions in aid for rural education and expressed willingness to join hands with the IT Ministry to undertake the 'Media Labs-India' project for developing software. The project is a joint venture between the IT Ministry and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.

Mr. Mahajan had discussions with the Institute on this project during his visit there in June last.

Interacts with CMs: Page 13

THE HINDU

15 SEP 2000

159 **Bill's choice** *hr/bs*

Microsoft, valued at \$340 billion by the market has chosen Bangalore-based Infosys, valued at \$16 billion by investors, to be one of its software development partners. Yes, this is another achievement for Infosys, a company whose business, management and accounting practices have set benchmarks for Indian corporates. More significantly, the deal also means that Indian software development skills are upgrading at a remarkably fast pace. This is significant: till recently, people used to gripe that Indian software developers were basically digital coolies, doing the drudge work that savvy software professionals wouldn't touch in the US. That was never entirely true, though the bulk of India's software exports came from performing tiresome chores like rewriting codes in obsolete languages to contain the Y2K bug. But the industry demonstrated its resilience and adaptability by continuing to grow into 2000 after the Y2K problem was sorted out. India's skills have grown to encompass troubleshooting for vast corporate automation and ERP projects, developing software solutions for clients and innovative ideas for the internet economy. Though Indian companies aren't significant players in the branded software market, that is due to a lack of big marketing budgets rather than any lack of technical expertise.

The deal is also significant for what industry, rather than the US Department of Justice, has done to Microsoft. A couple of years ago, Microsoft was perceived as a bullying monopolist in the operating system market, using this to elbow out competitors in a parallel market for internet browsers. Microsoft may or may not be broken up, but the fast evolving internet economy has made sure that Mr Gates is talking about growing through partnerships, rather than trying to corner markets and retain them for itself only. Its new product, .NET, for which it is hunting for partners, is something that expands the possibilities of the Net. Unlike Microsoft's past products, .NET does not guarantee exclusivity, nor a guaranteed stream of revenues. And for the first time, Gates might have to share source codes for .NET. This is the triumph of technology.

The Economic Time.

15 SEP 2000

15 SEP 2000

Unlocking Gates

They came from all corners of India, bearing gifts and proposals. Ten chief ministers descended on New Delhi in a bid to attract some of Microsoft chief Bill Gates' fabled billions. S M Krishna presented him a sandalwood Buddha and made a pitch for Karnataka. Keshubhai Patel offered a SmartCard driving licence and sought investment in research and development in Gujarat. Ashok Gehlot offered 100 acres and a Rs 10 crore corpus if Microsoft would help establish an institute of information technology in Jaipur. And the irrepressible Chandrababu Naidu offered to set up a Microsoft mini-technopolis. The chief ministers weren't the only ones clamouring for Mr Gates' attention. In a hectic 24-hour span, he managed to also meet corporate bigwigs, call on infotech minister Pramod Mahajan, hold a press conference and address a technology summit. There were photo-ops galore, and much rhetoric about India's emergence as an infotech superpower. But even as Mr Gates winged his way back to Sydney, analysts were already starting to assess ground realities. And the arithmetic that emerged is as follows: Hyderabad got \$50 million for expansion of Microsoft's existing research and development centre; Infosys clinched a worldwide alliance to develop business solutions based on Windows 2000 and the .NET platform; and the infotech ministry got a grant of \$5 million for its rural IT education programme. Everybody else went home empty-handed. Naturally, cynics will have a field day. The obvious argument is that a lot of hype and hoopla was generated over a visit that mattered not a whit to the common man.

Some will also say that the whole visit was nothing but a marketing exercise in which Mr Bill Gates hardsold Microsoft, particularly the company's .NET vision of a unified wired world, instantly accessible from any digital device. There is certainly a grain of truth in this observation, but it's unfair to judge Mr Gates' visit purely in terms of numbers. For one thing, major business and investment decisions are rarely taken off the cuff — and make no mistake, despite his recent philanthropic activities, Mr Gates is still primarily an extremely shrewd businessman. The groundwork for the Infosys deal was done well before it was formally unveiled on Thursday and market operators had begun buying into the scrip well in advance. Rather than moping about deals that weren't done, it makes more sense to focus on the vast opportunities that Mr Gates indicated. He evinced much interest in India's manpower capabilities, which reflects the importance of the role that Microsoft visualises for Indian talent both within and outside the company. More significantly, he spoke of the large number of alliances and partnerships that Microsoft would have to forge to make .NET work — which should be sweet music to the ears of Indian software developers. Sure, Mr Gates had very little to give to the states, but then most infotech giants prefer to have as little to do with governments as possible. Note that Andhra Pradesh, the only state to get investment from Microsoft, has a chief minister who likes to style himself as its CEO. There's a lesson here for the despondent chief ministers: don't waste time and energy chasing hand-outs from high-profile individuals. Instead, focus on creating a conducive business environment and infrastructure. The big money will follow.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

16 SEP 2000

Customer in Control

Bringing Internet to a New Level

By BILL GATES

IF you go back more than 50 years ago to the original vision of what we now call the PC, the Memex, we read with it. It was a device that was comfortable to sit and read. The PC screens today don't achieve that. Sure, if somebody sends you a two or three screen piece of e-mail, you read it off the screen. For example, the technology magazines such as *PC Week* or *InfoWorld* that I used to read on paper, I now read on the screen. However, when I want to read a fiction book or even if somebody sends me a ten-page memo, that's printed out. We have to get the readability to be as good as paper.

There are many elements that go into that; the design of the software, the screen, the form factor and yet we feel we're very close to being able to achieve that. It will be a feature of every PC and there will be dedicated reading devices as well. We also feel like we've got to get the PC into the collaboration loop when people are sitting down and meeting with each other. If you're sitting there typing, the keyboard is noisy, people are wondering, what you are doing, are you reading your mail, are you paying attention to what they're saying? It's not yet part of that standard way of getting together. Even when you're at a distance you don't think about sharing an experience through the PC screen where you're editing and talking together. Instead, messaging is catching on through products such as netmeeting.

Over the next five years between reading and real time communication, we can more than double the time people spend in front of the PC. This is an era that the use of the PC for creativity and communications will more than double even as we're 25 years into this pursuit of the PC vision. In the world of business, there is a high level of interest in what the Internet can do. People are asking, how can these digital approaches make them more efficient, make them more competitive? It's at a real fever pitch. Companies' stock prices are evaluated according to whether they have a great Internet strategy and there's also some start-ups coming along that are challenging the existing businesses in areas like banking,

There is also the idea of matching buyers with sellers, the fundamental mechanism of capitalism. This can certainly be improved radically by the digital approaches. The Internet of tomorrow will solve that problem.

In the US, over the last five or six years, the employment figures, the growth figures, the lack of inflation have really confounded the economists. They've had to admit there is a new external factor. The use of the PC technology that really changed during these last six or seven years, has changed things radically. They were saying well, what is this computer thing really doing? Well, now they've seen it and seen it in a much stronger way than they believed possible. But it's really scratching the surface. Collaboration, efficient buying and selling, elimination of paperwork, making jobs more effective, easily finding information inside your company, effective sales

them? It's simple. The information should be a digital video on the Internet.

So what I'm saying is that the Internet will be brought to a new level. It seems like a radical statement. Doesn't the Internet do everything today? In fact, its already gone through several generations. The era of Internet as a browsing environment is coming to a close now. That's not to say that browsing won't still exist but this era's been characterised by all of the input coming off the keyboard, primarily being driven by PC screens only. The user has no control, if they want to see what information's out there they've got to go to many different screens.

People often say, why don't we make things simpler? It's true, we need to make things simpler but we don't want to take away the empowerment. Just saying to people that their whole job is just clicking on screens and not letting people do the kind of creativity software that really defines their work, that's not the path forward. We've got to make it easier to update software, easier to keep these systems going. If you ever have a problem, why can't somebody take over your system, see the screen, do the right thing? That's got to be built-in. The Internet is the solution.

One of the hot issues today is this issue of privacy. If I give out my e-mail address, am I just going to get flooded with a lot of junk? How would we prevent that from happening? The key idea is to take anybody who wants to use your time, which is a scarce resource, and have a piece of software which I call the agent that runs on your behalf. The agent looks at information and based on your schedule says: What time of day is it, where are you, what kind of devices do you have with you, who is this person sending it, what's it about and, based on that, using your preferences it decides okay, I'll just throw this away, or I'll notify them later. And so you, the user, get back in control and it's across all your different devices how communication takes place.

(These are excerpts from a speech made by Bill Gates in Sydney, Australia, earlier this month.)

IN BRIEF

- Future PCs will have dedicated reading devices
- The PC is a new external factor in US employment, growth and inflation figures
- The era of Internet as a browsing environment is coming to a close
- Updating software must be made easier

analysis, trying out a new idea and sharing it with people, knowing changes in the marketplace, getting fast feedback from your customers, this is only the beginning of what we can do here.

Customer service will be redefined. You can go out, check what's going on and if you see something you disagree with on your screen, you can be talking to somebody who has your complete history and will help you out. So in this new world, it's the best of the screen and the best of the phone. For people who work in business, a lot of their time is spent inefficiently today. If you leave a meeting, you're talking to somebody who wasn't there, how do you share that information with

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 SEP 2000

Delhi HC calls for action against telecom staffers

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

NEW DELHI: The high court on Friday asked the government to take strict action against those who had disrupted telephone services in the country in protest against the corporatisation of telecom services.

Adjourning the petition challenging such corporatisation until October 19, a division bench of Chief Justice Arijit Passayat and D.K. Jain said they would like to see the services return to normal before going into the issues raised in the petition.

"There need not be any judicial order from the court to take strict action against the employees found guilty of disrupting services," the bench said.

A non-governmental organisation, Telecom Watchdog, has challenged the government's decision to corporatise the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) from October on the ground that the proposed body—Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)—will not be able to fulfil the obligation of expanding telephone services to every nook and corner of the country.

The NGO also challenged the "doling" out of several incentives to the employees of BSNL, saying this would put an enormous burden on the state exchequer.

Telecom Watchdog counsel C.S. Vaidyanathan said the corporatisation of telecom departments in foreign countries had taken place when the teledensity had reached a level of 20 per cent or more. In India, it stands at a mere 2.5 per cent.

In any case, the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) had shown no improvement after its corporatisation, Mr Vaidyanathan said.

Solicitor-general Harish Salve said the expenditure for increasing the existing rural teledensity would

be to the tune of Rs 1.5 lakhs per telephone line and neither the government nor private telecom operators had enough funds.

Therefore, funding from financial institutions was essential and that would not be possible unless telecom reforms were expedited. Mr Salve said the corporatisation of the telecom sector was a step in this direction.

Meanwhile, communications minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Friday said action would be taken against those workers found to have sabotaged telecom operations in the country.

Mr Paswan asked all heads of telecom circles, who were in the capital, to look into the disruption of telecom services and file reports in this regard. The disruption in telecom services had "damaged the image of the departments of telecom", Mr Paswan said.

He said a special committee had been appointed to look into the various causes responsible for the disruption. Mr Paswan said that the special committee, headed by senior deputy director general Dilip Sahay, would submit its report on September 29.

Reviewing the matter with the chief general managers in the meeting, he said reports received by them would be examined and stern action would be taken against those responsible for the crisis.

Mr Paswan said "work to rule" was legitimate but "this kind of misrule is not correct". On corporatisation, he said, it was a government policy and nobody can question it. The corporatisation, which takes effect from October 1, has already looked into the financial viability of the workers which has been worked out to "their satisfaction," the minister said. He said before the decision was taken several committees had been set up to look into anomalies in respect of pension and finance among others.

It's final: PSU garb^V for telecom services

K.A. Badarinath
New Delhi, September 27

IT'S GOODBYE Department of Telecom Services, hello Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. The country's largest ever public sector company will be born on Sunday, October 1.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, with an asset base of over Rs 63,000 crore and a workforce of 3.63 lakh, is the new, corporatised avatar of the flaccid Department of Telecom Services.

A major part of today's four-hour meeting of the Vajpayee Cabinet was spent on dotting the i's and crossing the t's before the transition was formalised.

Significantly, paranoid telecom unions, which over the last couple of months have resisted the Vajpayee Government's efforts to corporatise the DTS, remained silent today. They have extracted their pound of flesh from the government through written commitments on post-retirement benefits, job security and such like.

Equally significant is the fact that the Centre has not been able to extract corresponding commitments from the Union on improving telecom services or overall accountability. In effect, as far as the employees are concerned, the spanking-new Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd will be a government department in PSU clothing.

Nevertheless, the imminent birth of the gargantuan PSU on Sunday is a major step towards the government withdrawing from telecom services. The govern-

Connecting India

● BSNL is to service 23.8 million telephone lines currently in operation across the country, except for Mumbai and Delhi (which are run by MTNL). BSNL inherits a switchboard network capable of handling up to 29.22 million lines.

● Nearly 3 million of BSNL's telephones will be in rural India, spread over 3.78 lakh villages.

● Coming with the territory are an automatic trunk exchange capacity for two million lines, 1.85 lakh km of optical fibre cable, 1.6 lakh km of microwave system and 416 satellite stations.

● The new company is to be headquartered in New Delhi.

ment's equity in the new company is to be Rs 5000 crore.

BSNL is to operate basic, cellular, domestic and international long distance telephony. It is to be the second largest employer in the public sector (after the Indian Railways).

Mr Pramod Mahajan, briefing the media after the Cabinet meeting, said the Centre would compensate BSNL for meeting its social obligations, such as running the unprofitable rural telephone service.

The Centre put its foot down on the unions' demand for a five year tax holiday for BSNL to make it a viable company in the highly competitive business of telecom services.

BSNL employees from the top two rungs (covering officers and engineers) would be deemed to be on deputation (without being paid a deputation allowance) till they are formally absorbed in the new company. Around three lakh employees in the lower two categories (support staff) are to be paid Rs 1000 per month extra if they agree to join BSNL on October 1 itself.

BSNL employees are also to be paid personal and family pension, medical, housing and other perks that they received as Central government employees.

The disbanding of the soon-to-be-redundant Indian Telecom Service (ITS) cadre has been put on hold, even though most of its members stand transferred to BSNL. A committee has been appointed to review the management of ITS.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 SEP 2000



A curious farmer getting a cyber-world crash course during the 'India Internet World 2000' at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Wednesday. Photo: Arvind Yadav

Cablemen wilt, but stir still on

DELHI CABLE operators began to wilt on Day 2 of their agitation against the Centre's efforts to rein them in, with one group (led by Mrs Roop Sharma) resuming services.

I&B Minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday assured cable TV representatives that satellite channels too would have to follow government norms and violators would be penalised. He also assured them they would not be harassed as only the Commissioner of Police, DMs and SDMs would have the power to ensure there are no violation of government guidelines.

But after the 45-minute meeting, Vipin Mehra of the pro-strike 'United Forum' announced: "The strike continues. The government's assurances are not satisfactory."

Sources said the operators are now want video channels banned and there should be an addressibility mechanism for the pay channels. "We can't interfere in these matters," a ministry official said.

HTC, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 SEP 2000

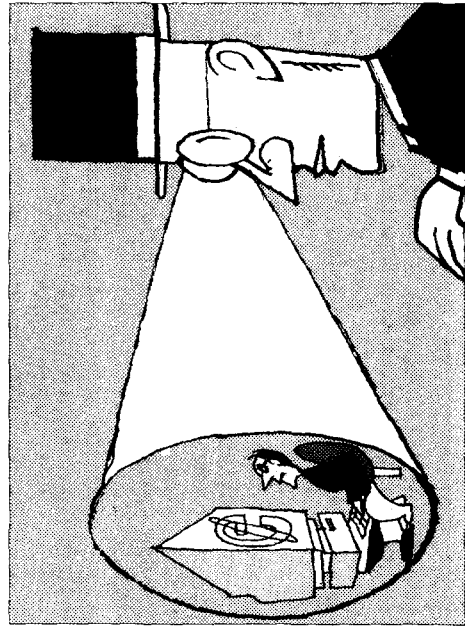
E-avesdropping in the e-world

Corporations in the US are already snooping on all of the network based activities of their employees, says G Anandalingam

One of the most significant events in the United States right now is a Congressional hearing on internet security.

Because of the number of benevolent and malevolent 'hacking' prevalent in the electronic world (the 'e-world'), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (the FBI) has proposed some rather draconian measures of electronic surveillance. In the extreme, the FBI would like all of the information moving through the global data networks to be 'sniffed', and an account kept of everything that transpires. They propose to set up systems that will be proactive rather than reactive in preventing all types of internet transgressions, especially in cases of destructive hacking like the recent 'I Love You' virus, and 'cyber terrorism' that penetrate the defence organisations in the US. Of course, in the process of this extensive e-avesdropping, the FBI could gather all sorts of information on all sorts of people.

The main reason for the hearing in the US Congress is the strong and vocal reaction to FBI proposal. Many organisations like the Open Society Foundation and many in academia are very angry about the real violations of the privacy of the citizens. Although the FBI has pledged to only use the information for preventing the extremely costly violations, there is a strong sense among most people that the loss of privacy would be irreparable. Further, there is a strong uneasiness about the government entering the homes of people in this networked world. Having had an immigrant history of escaping state



New York Times newspaper fired 23 employees for sending crude and offensive e-mails to each other. Last year, Xerox dismissed 40 employees for violating its internet policy and surfing pornographic sites. In a recent study by The American

Management Association, they found that 45 per cent of the companies surveyed had disciplined their workers

for misuse or personal use of the company's e-mail. Clearly, e-avesdropping in the US corporate world is widespread and pervasive. In this network centric economy, it is very easy for the company to watch over its employees. Unlike in the case of the FBI proposal, there seems to be no reaction from corporate employees, who should have the same value system as those who react to the government, because of course they are the same people. There are a number of reasons for this docility. First of all, in these days that are portrayed as the information economy with knowledge workers, most companies want to ensure that there is no leakage of intellectual property. Companies claim that they need to monitor the e-mail and Net activities of their employees to minimise the breach of trade secrets, contracts, and other

cent monitored internet connections, 38 per cent actually store and read the employees e-mails, 31 per cent monitored all computer files, and 12 per cent listened in to telephone conversations.

In fact, an Indian friend of mine from IBM told of the following incident: Apparently one day he had emailed another friend, a prospective employee, and complained about the parochial nature of the IBM location, Yorktown Heights, a suburb of New York City. What happened within a day of his e-mailed message shocked him. He was summoned by his Vice President and given a warning that private e-mails were not allowed, especially when it gave the IBM location a bad name! Clearly, his e-mail had been read, and was used to intimidate him. The above tale is not meant to single out IBM. In December 1999, The

information that provides them with a competitive edge. Companies also maintain that they want to ensure that their employees do not violate copyright laws by downloading material, pictures, software, etc., from the internet. They also declare that their biggest concern is the sharing and transmission of sexually explicit, racist and other offensive material. Corporate employees and the public at large seem to be of the opinion that the companies are justified in their concerns regarding the safeguarding of corporate information and their own legal liability.

However, the single biggest reason that there is little reaction from the public against corporate violation of privacy is the deep-seated view in the US that the employees are in companies at the will and fancy of the employers. There is a collective sense of the primacy of the corporation.

As Harry Truman once said, "What is good for General Motors, is good for America". Thus, if companies say that snooping on their employees is essential for maintaining its competitive edge, then most people who are unwilling to let the government (or FBI) do that to prevent cyber-terrorism are willing to subjugate their individual rights for the corporation. It seems that e-avesdropping will be a mainstay in the 'big brother' corporate e-worlds.

The author is Chair (Department of Systems Engineering) National Center Professor of Resource and Technology Management, and Professor of Information Management (The Wharton School)

Telecom firms allowed to acquire foreign equity

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 9. The Union Cabinet has cleared a proposal allowing the Indian partner of a telecom sector licensee to acquire the share-holding of its foreign partners at the time of restructuring the company's equity. The much-awaited migration package for radio paging operators was also approved.

Accepting the recommendations made by the Group of Telecom and IT Convergence headed by the Union Finance Minister, the Cabinet also agreed to allow substitution of an existing foreign partner by another foreign partner provided the latter's experience and standing were similar to that of the outgoing partner. Such substitution would be subject to Department of Telecommunication's approval.

Similarly, the transfer of equity between the existing Indian promoters would be permitted provided the majority of Indian partners continue to hold the present share-holding for a period of five years from the date of licence agreement.

In another important move, the Cabinet also approved a migration package for radio paging operators, effective from August 1, 1999, which permits the industry to migrate to revenue sharing. For migrating city radio paging operators, the licence fee has been fixed at five per cent of the gross revenue. In case of circle radio paging, the licensee fee has also been stipulated at five per cent of the gross revenue, pending recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

Revenues for incoming calls are to be shared between paging and the basic service providers. While the customs duty on pagers has been slashed to five per cent to be on a par with cellular companies, the WPC charge of Rs. 100 a subscriber a year has been dropped.

The Cabinet meeting last evening also decided to allow Internet service providers to set up landing stations for international gateways for internet using

submarine cables. This would help increase the international bandwidth connectivity for the country.

Significantly, those setting up landing stations would be permitted to share the bandwidth with others. The law does not permit such sharing of bandwidth but exception has been made in view of the huge investment involved in establishing such stations. This concession would be extended to other Internet providers using other routes for accessibility to international gateways. A proposal in this regard to bring them at par with those using submarine cables would be brought before the Cabinet soon, the Union Minister for Information Technology, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, said while briefing reporters on the meeting.

New education scheme

The Cabinet also accorded approval for the Education Guarantee Scheme and the Alternative Innovative Education Scheme aimed at drawing child dropouts in the age group of 6 to 14 back into the formal school system. The scheme will be implemented throughout the country with a plan allocation of Rs. 1965.42 crores.

Under the new scheme, the Centre-State ratio for sharing of expenditure would be a uniform 75:25. Under the present non-formal education scheme, the sharing is 90:10 for girls-only centres and 60:40 for co-ed centres.

A proposal to bring about legislation to pave the way for enforcement of an international agreement to exempt aviation turbine fuel (ATF) from sales tax in India was also given the nod.

Probe against Kalpnath Rai dropped

Similarly, approval was accorded for the introduction of a bill to repeal the Industrial Disputes (Banking Companies) Decision Act, 1955. The Cabinet also agreed to close the probe in the sugar import scandal involving the former Union Minister, late Kalpnath Rai, in view of his death.

THE HINDU

10 AUG 2000

Journalists beaten up inside Writers'

HT Correspondent
Calcutta, August 10

A SECTION of the employees of the State Government's information and culture (I&C) department at Writers' Buildings today gave a taste of their total disregard for free flow of information by severely bashing up nearly a dozen print and electronic media journalists.

At least five journalists were badly hurt. They were examined by Dr Manas K Chakrabarty of the health department who gave them first-aid.

The employees did not even spare a lady reporter of Eenadu Television, Gargi Guha Thakurta. They pounced on her and abused her, before pushing her to a corner.

Trouble started at around noon when a group of information and culture department employees met the unit's director, Tarapada Ghosh, on the fourth floor to give a deputation on their various demands, including promotion. Some of these employees had invited electronic and print media journalists from the Press Corner to cover the incident.

But, apparently, some rivals of these employees felt enraged by the "undue media attention" and threatened the scribes with dire conse-

Deputy Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee later met journalists and assured them of a thorough investigation into the matter

quences if they did not leave the place immediately. They demanded that the cameramen should destroy the films, or else their cameras would be broken.

General Secretary of the State Government Employees' Coordination Committee, Smarajit Roychowdhury, however, denied involvement of any of its members in the incident. He also demanded that the real culprits be brought to book.

Infuriated at the reprehensible behaviour, the mediapersons vehemently protested, leading to heated exchanges between the two sides. The I&C employees suddenly turned violent and started beating up the journalists.

Among those who were severely manhandled were Arijit Sengupta and Debyendu Dey of

Khobar Ekhon, Somasankar Banerjee and Kalyan Moitra of *The Times of India*, Asim Manna and Tapan Gan of *Khas Khabar*, Shibapriya Dasgupta of *Pratyahik Sambad*, Debabrata Thakur of *Anandabazar Patrika* and Amit Sarbadhikary, a senior journalist.

Later, the journalists took up the matter with Finance Minister Asim Dasgupta and demanded stern action against the culprits. Dasgupta apologised for the employees' behaviour and promised to take up the matter with the Deputy Chief Minister.

"I must assure you all that this is certainly not our Government's perception. We do not want to treat newsmen in such a manner," he added.

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee also met the journalists and assured them of a thorough investigation into the matter.

Information and Culture Department Secretary Arun Bhattacharya later informed that a Joint Secretary of the Home Department will probe the matter and submit a report to the Government within three days.

Secretary of the Press Club, Tapanayan Ghosh, condemned the unprovoked and dastardly assault on the journalists and demanded exemplary punishment for the guilty.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 AUG 2000

Journalists beaten up at Writers'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Aug. 10. — Journalists were beaten up inside Writers' Buildings today by employees of the information and cultural affairs department. The attack was apparently carried out by staffers belonging to the Coordination Committee, a CPI-M affiliate.

In all, 12 journalists were beaten up or heckled when they were covering the submission of a memorandum by department officers to the information director, Mr Tarapada Ghosh.

The reporters had been tipped off about the deputation by a member of the officers' association. Around 2 p.m., they went up to the director's room on the top floor of the secretariat.

Trouble began when members of a television team was interviewing a woman deputationist in the corridor outside the director's office.

5/1 11/8
About 20 employees, not members of the association submitting the memorandum, emerged from an adjacent room and challenged the journalists' right to cover the incident.

"Do you have permission to film in this area? Don't you know it is a protected area?", they asked. The journalists said they had accreditation cards which entitled them to cover any incident inside the secretariat. Besides, the director's office was outside the protected area. "Give us your card numbers," the employees told the journalists. "We will cancel your cards," they warned.

A woman reporter from ETV was heckled and abused in the filthiest of words by men at least 20 years senior to her. She was gheraoed and asked to hand over the cassette covering the incident.

Arguments followed, and soon things took an ugly turn. The employees started beating up the journalists. From The

Times of India received a blow and began bleeding. Another senior journalist from Ananda Bazar Patrika took a severe beating. Other journalists were kicked around. An employee was heard directing his colleagues to take all journalists behind a collapsible gate and beat them up.

The employees threatened to smash the camera of a TV channel crew. The crew of another channel were forced to erase the bytes they had shot. One cameraman was warned that if his footage was telecast tonight, he would be skinned alive tomorrow.

Some of these employees were later identified as Mr Sukumar De, Mr Alok Ray and Mr Satya Pal — all said to be members of the Coordination Committee. The general secretary of the committee, Mr Smarajit Ray Chowdhury, however, denied any of those involved in the attack represented

■ See JOURNALISTS: page 4

JOURNALISTS:

(Continued from page 1)

his organisation.

The journalists complained to the deputy chief minister, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, and the finance minister, Dr Asim Dasgupta. Both apologised for the incident. Mr Bhattacharya has ordered an inquiry into the incident by a joint secretary of the home department who has been told to submit his report in three days.

Mamata outraged: Miss Mamata Banerjee condemned the attack. "No one is safe in this state. Now it's the turn of journalists. The CPI-M is showing its Fascist face every day. It will not brook any criticism or exposure of its misdeeds. Democracy has no place in the Marxists' lexicon," she said.

The city's media fraternity condemned the incident. The Press Club of Calcutta demanded stern action against the guilty.

THE STATESMAN

11 AUG 2000

China sets up cyberpolice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, AUG 13

CHINA has set up its first Internet police unit in the eastern province of Anhui and plans to replicate it in 20 other provinces to ensure cybersecurity and maintain social stability.

The newly-established Anhui cyberpolice has dealt with several Internet crimes, including cheating, property embezzlement and pornography over the past few weeks, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Head of the Anhui Internet police, Tian Yangchang, said the main task of the group is to administer and maintain order on computer networks.

Tian said his team has already

helped some local banks to discover and plug loopholes in electronic-information networks and trained many volunteers as electronic security-guards.

The police task-force has also cooperated closely with the local media to alert computer-users of viruses and with scientific research institutes to develop filter programs for families with children.

China now has more than 17 million Internet users and the number is still growing at a speed of 100 per cent every year. However, the Xinhua report did not mention policing political content on the Internet, the main concern of China's ruling Communist Party.

A leading Hong Kong newspaper recently reported that the

Communist Party has authorised vice-president Hu Jintao to oversee the orderly growth of China's Internet sector without compromising national security.

The party leadership is also setting up a monitoring group to scrutinise the political content of websites and enterprises, the paper said.

The inter-departmental unit under the politburo will have representatives drawn from public security, state security and information industry ministries, the *South China Morning Post* reported today.

The focus is on combating infiltration and sabotage, particularly when Net-related warfare breaks out with a hostile country, the report said.

China regularly blocks websites of major western media organisations, western human rights groups, Tibetan exiles and other sources of information it deems politically-sensitive or 'dangerous' for the Chinese people.

Members of the banned Falun Gong cult have also been arrested for using the Internet to spread information about their faith and about Government efforts to crush the movement.

Falun Gong's New York-based founder, Li Hongzhi, has been using the Internet to give instructions to his followers.

Chinese police has closed down several cult websites since the Government ordered massive nationwide crackdown on its followers in July, last year.

INDIAN EXPRESS

14 AUG 2000

Journalists attacked

14/8 again *medi*

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE *ST*

UTTARPARA, Aug. 13. — Some journalists were attacked by alleged CPI-M cadres here today during the election to the Uttarpara-Kotrang municipality. Rampant rigging, scaring away voters and beating up scribes marked the poll.

Journalists of the print and electronic media were attacked when they went to Bhadrakali High School after receiving reports of booth jamming. A group of people, reported to be CPI-M workers, dragged away an E-TV reporter and beat him up.

The mob snatched the reels from the cameras of some city-based photographers. Three CPI-M workers were arrested in connection with the violence.

The CPI-M's Uttarpara Bhadrakali local committee, however, claimed in a faxed message that the election was "fair and peaceful." "We are in no way connected with the heckling of journalists."

About 70 per cent of the votes were polled. The counting will be held tomorrow.

1 4 0 2 0 0

Long-distance phone calls privatised.

19/5
ST
Media

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE & AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, Aug. 13. — The Centre today opened up the telecom sector, allowing private operators to carry long-distance calls as recently promised by the Prime Minister.

Issuing the guidelines today, the telecom minister, Mr Ram Vilas Paswan, said private operators would have a right to carry inter-circle and intra-circle long-distance traffic, the latter after mutual agreements with fixed service providers (FSPs).

An inter-circle call is one from one city of a state to another city of a different state while an intra-circle call is from one city to another in the same state. The inter-city market is worth about Rs 4,000 crore annually. The intra-circle market is twice that. DoT had apparently opposed the opening up of intra-circle calls, claiming it would affect the organisation when it was privatised in 2004. This was overruled apparently on the theory that no private sector organisation would be happy with just inter-circle calls since they would not be financially feasible.

Those who get licences will have to establish switching and transmission centres in long-distance charging areas. National long-distance operators can make arrangements with FSPs for picking up the traffic between long-distance charging centres and short-distance ones.

Mr Paswan told reporters that there would be no restriction on the number of firms involved in national long-distance telephone services. But the opening up was "for serious players with a solid background in the sector," he said.

An Indian registered company with a maximum foreign equity of 49 per cent will be eligible for a licence. The minister said an operator would have to cover 15 per cent of the charging area within two years, 40 per cent in three years, 80 per cent in four years and 100 per cent in seven years.

Those who cannot cover 15 per cent of the charged area within two years will have to forfeit their licence fee of Rs 100 crore, he said. The operator has to pay a one-time entry fee of Rs 100 crore and a bank guarantee of Rs 400 crore, to be released in phases on fulfilment of network roll-out obligations, including covering certain remote areas to ensure that the benefit of opening up reaches every corner of the country.

Speaking about the end of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited's monopoly over long-distance telephone services, the minister said till it completed its stipulated term which could be before 2004, the government would emphasise STD rather than ISD calls.

"The latter will come when the monopoly of VSNL will be reviewed in 2004," he said.

The VSNL's monopoly could end before 2004, officials said.

The paid-up capital for applicant companies will have to be Rs 250 crore while the net worth of the promoters of the applicant company will have to be Rs 2,500 crore.

THE STATESMAN

14 AUG 2004

WHEN a US judge in July stayed an order plugging Napster, he sent shivers up the world's entertainment-industry spine.

Napster makes possible downloading of digitized music from one computer hard drive to another. It's the music industry's scariest nightmare.

Napster has shifted piracy to piracy-enabling. It's like a pirate providing the know-how, but disclaiming any responsibility to what is being pirated. With a few billion dollars at stake, the music industry is screaming intellectual property theft and hoping for some judicial mercy.

It isn't just music alone. Films, books, articles, paintings, credit card numbers, Internet accounts et all come under threat.

Stephen King, with his new \$-1 a chapter Internet book, might have asked for more headaches than he could handle. The future of such e-commerce enterprise hangs hard on the sharpness of laws legislatures across the world are scrambling now to enact.

In the Internet world that rah-rahs hackers and crackers (supposedly the less malignant variety of breakers-in), intellectual property rights earn little respect and notice. That's only at the second level. The basic level already sees plenty of content matter-pinching, whether from website to website, or from off-line sources. Some amount of corruption is inevitable. But the Internet danger is glorifying the corruption.

The problem is the corruption as seen from different perspectives. The hacker culture, at its respectable best, wants everything in the Internet to be freely available. *Time* magazine in a June issue, quoted a 23-year-old Clarke believing, copyright is a crutch. Its inherent nature that information wants to be free.

Whether its the Clarke types or Ma Nature more interested in information being bill-free, the point is a growing tribe of young technologists believing creative mental efforts should be rendered as a social service. This British youngster's claim to fame is creating the Freenet, one up on Napster in that it allows for file swapping with anonymity.

Cheerfulness of youth doesn't care much beyond how much fun and mayhem can be had out of the establishment (read as anyone with any rules). But serious worries emerge about how much of a dream-come-true-system Freenet can be to criminals like child molesters, terrorists and to money-laundering *dhobis* escaping monitoring of law enforcement agencies.

The Clarke school of thought still doesn't care. Technology that enables information flow can't be judged by potential misuse, it believes.

So, says Clarke, information should be available as free as the air we breathe. Creative merchants like musicians, he suggests, can make their money in other ways. Like selling merchandise like T-shirts or even donations from appreciative and more charita-

Revenge of the Internet gods

The recent flip-flop court ruling over Napster, allowing free exchange of music over the Internet, raises pressing ethical questions over intellectual property rights clashing with motives behind the Internet creation, says RAJA M



world's economy and life styles get Internet-linked, more of property and privacy demands protection from anarchists having no respect for logic behind laws.

Deterrent should be in judging the criminal intent, whether the illegal access was gained online or offline should make no difference. If anything, the off-line lawbreaker should be slammed with harsher deterrents.

Someone breaking into my e-mail box represents a greater threat to my privacy than someone reading my paper mail, simply because the former can invade my privacy more easily and more often.

Likewise, young nerds hacking into national defence comput-

ers are being let off easily, sending exactly the wrong encouragement to similar aspirants. Imagine a document stealer caught in a highly security sensitive area of a military headquarters being let off with a fine and a scolding.

The problem is the online crime not being seen as being as threatening, if not more so.

The height of irony was a recent hackers' underground conference in the USA being graced by the assistant secretary of defence pleading for the more illustrious of the hacker tribe to join the army. The principle of setting a thief to catch a thief might make sound strategy, but it also legitimizes thieving expertise.

The hackers' mentality couldn't care. Reports mention the assistant secretary was both booed and received with awe. But until governments think of ways to debunk and severely discourage any perceived romance in hacking, the trillions of dollars-worth of projected e-commerce will only remain projected pipe dreams. Not many are going to disclose credit-card numbers and personal information online. I definitely won't be creating potential for trouble.

In a way, the hackers, crackers and virus-creating addicts represent the great irony of the Internet. These anarchists could be the revenge of the Internet gods, the pioneering builders who believed the Internet should represent everything that is free, liberal and non-commercial about the human race. Many of the Internet pioneers have long since packed their disillusionment and left. Their ghosts remain as the spirit driving the Internet anarchists, to whom

a password or a firewall is like a fluorescent red flag to a mad bull.

Still, the law of the land has to prevail, be it Internet-connected or not. And if privacy and private property is threatened, for just the heck of it, then knuckle-rapping and sermonizing won't help.

To begin with, the hacker tribe first needs to be dealt with as anti-social elements, than romanticized as anti-establishment heroes. In a saner world, Napster and young Clarke would have been arrested for being accessories to crime.

(The author is a freelance writer)

An eye on web privacy

17/8
By MICHAEL JAMES *MDM 51-11*

While you're surfing the Web for information, the Web may be surfing for information about you. Hardly a day goes by without another report of cybersnooping, not by criminals or teen-age hackers, but by corporate America.

Wherever you travel Online, businesses are hungry for information about you. The advertising industry wants to know what you think, where you live and what you want to buy, and critics say they're all too willing to invade your privacy to do it.

Consider some Orwellian examples:

- Through "spyware" files embedded in many popular programs, advertisers can learn what information you download, what music you listen to, and what Web sites you visit. These files often remain even when you've deleted the original program.
- Companies offering wireless Web surfing through cellular phones may leave your phone number on every Web site you visit.
- If you're using a wireless modem, your exact location can be pinpointed and even plotted out mile-by-mile on a map, by companies hoping to send you an instant ad for a department store you may have just driven past.
- Whistle-blowers or letter-writers who think they're anonymous may find that their names can be easily traced by digital imprints that Microsoft has stamped on Word documents.

Concerned by regular disclosures of new intrusions into the everyday lives of Internet users, privacy advocates are blitzing the public, business leaders, government agencies and Congress with warnings. "We're being watched a lot while we use our computers," said Richard M. Smith, a Massachusetts-based soft-

ware engineer and privacy expert who has exposed some of the most celebrated intruders. "Our lives are going to be a lot more closely monitored from now on."

One of the biggest concerns among privacy advocates is the increasing use of spyware programs by advertisers and companies trying to study consumer habits. "The greater threat to privacy is not being posed by 'Big Brother' government but from private industry," said Steven A. Hetcher, an assistant professor of law at Vanderbilt University and an Internet privacy expert.

"In the modern age, computers are the recording boxes of our lives. There's a lot of information to be gained. As time goes on, more and more people are going to try and tap into the richly detailed dossiers that are being created about people."

"Spyware" refers to software that can quietly collect information about your digital habits, including your favorite Web sites and what files you've downloaded. The programs, embedded in hundreds of popular titles that include RealJukebox, the Go!zilla download manager, and various Netscape utilities, are capable of quietly relaying personal information back to cyber advertisers.

Typically, these programs operate for months or years until they're discovered and exposed by independent testers and computer privacy advocates such as Smith and Steve Gibson, head of California-based Gibson Research. Just as typically, the companies caught deny any wrongdoing, but agree to remove the spyware. "We're trying to shine some bright lights on this bad behavior," said Gibson, whose Web site has adopted the rallying cry, "IT'S MY COMPUTER." (LATWP Svc)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 AUG 2000

Hackers vandalise VSNL website

HT Correspondent
Mumbai, August 16

HT/1

Media

HACKERS, APPARENTLY owing allegiance to Pakistan, hacked the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) site on Tuesday night and left behind crude messages of alleged Indian brutality.

The defaced site read: "Doodh Nahi Piyoge to aisa he hoga" and "India celebrates its Independence Day and Kashmiris are still fighting for freedom." The VSNL site was hacked late on Tuesday evening. VSNL authorities removed the offending messages the following day.

"I would not say that the VSNL site was hacked. What the hackers did was that they added one additional page to the VSNL site", said Mr. Amitabh Kumar, Director (Operations) of the VSNL.

The messages left by the hackers were crude and one of the message recounted in gory detail an alleged incident of Army brutality on April 27 jawans in the Handwara area of J&K. After giving out the details, the hacker exhorted "idiots" to await the second part of the story.

Thrilled with the fact that they managed to deface the site, the hackers left juvenile messages like "VSNL, may you have an unhappy Independence Day". Mr. Amitabh Kumar said that the VSNL had taken all precautions it could. "We have had security precautions like firewall and other such devices. But under some circumstances, people can access the site" said Mr. Kumar. He denied that the VSNL had anticipated such an attack. "The VSNL site is under attack all the time. We take all precautions to the extent we can. For August 15 we had taken special precautions," said Mr. Kumar. He pointed out that the hackers had gained access to the VSNL site and managed to deface it for "only a little time" on Tuesday night. Mr Prashant Deorah of Purtech Internet Private Limited, which has worked on some aspects of the VSNL site, said, "Yes, normal precautions like firewall coupled with software and hardware support have to be taken. But I agree that on important days like Independence Day, special measures need to be taken."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 AUG 2000

STD, ISD calls to cost less

Rate for US down by Rs 12, Delhi-Mumbai by Rs 5 per minute

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, August 28

THERE IS some good news for telephone subscribers. To restructure tariffs and cut cross-subsidies, TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) today announced reductions of up to Rs 12 per minute in the rates for domestic long distance and international telephone calls. The new rates are to be effective from October 1 and run till March 31, 2002.

Domestic long distance, or subscriber trunk dialing (STD), rates could be expected to decline further following the opening up (earlier this month) of this sector to private players.

TRAI today also refrained from increasing telephone rentals or the local call charges.

A Delhi-Mumbai call (1000 km-plus category) from October will be cheaper by roughly Rs 5 at a per minute pulse charge of Rs 1.20. A Delhi-Ajmer call (500 to 1000 km range) will go down by Rs 3.60 per minute and a Delhi-Chandigarh call (200 to 500 km range) will be reduced by Rs 3.50 per minute.

Today's announcement is the second major reduction in STD charges. It now has come

STD AND ISD RATES		
EFFECTIVE FROM OCTOBER 1, 2000		
RUPEES PER MINUTE		
STD		
Pulse charges @ Rs 1.20		
	EXISTING	NEW RATES
Upto 50 kms	1.20	1.20
50 - 200 kms	6.00	6.00
200 - 500 kms	15.60	12.00
500 - 1000 kms	21.60	18.00
Above 1000 kms	30.00	25.20
ISD		
Pulse charges @ Rs 1.20		
	EXISTING	NEW RATES
SAARC and other neighbouring countries	30.00	25.20
Countries in Africa, Europe, Gulf, Asia and Oceania	49.20	40.80
Countries in the American continent and the Western Hemisphere	61.20	49.20

down by nearly 85 per cent of the total reduction envisaged by the original tariff order.

The new rates also mean that international call rates to the US will go down by 20 per cent, calls to Europe and the Gulf region will be cheaper by 17 per cent and call tariffs to the neighbouring countries will come down by 15 per cent.

Significantly, TRAI's has decided to implement the second phase of tariff rebalancing only partly.

The last time tariffs for STD/ISD calls went down it was accompanied by an increase in rentals as the regulator was trying to usher in a cost-based tariff regime.

Telephone rentals have not been hiked because, as TRAI claims, cost-based tariffs have been reworked on the basis of a new methodology.

It expects that revenues of the Department of Telecom Services, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd and private operators will not be impacted in any significant manner if rentals and local call charges are not increased.

If anything, it could increase demand and, consequently, revenues, thereby increasing tele-density in the country.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

29 AUG 2000

The party's just begun

One cheer, if you will, for the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), which has cut long distance phone tariffs. For high-volume areas, domestic long distance (DLD) rates have fallen between 16 to 23 per cent. International calls are also cheaper by 16 per cent if you call nearby countries, with discounts of up to 20 per cent for calls to the US and the western hemisphere. The cuts look good in percentage terms. But where's the catch? The trouble is India's long distance rates are still exorbitantly high. Its telecom reforms are so far behind the leaders, that the rate cuts barely skim the surface of what has to be done. Even after the tariff cuts take place in October, India's STD calls will cost four to fourteen times as much as similar calls in the US. India prices STD calls to ensure that rates increase with distance, an idea that has almost died out in the US market where interstate long distance calls are priced about the same as intra-state calls. This has happened because bandwidth and carrying costs have fallen by over 90 per cent since the late 1970s, driven by technology like optical fibre, digital compression and packet switching. The result is erstwhile monopolist AT&T is rethinking strategy — it might sell its local long distance operations off to more efficient buyers.

In India, the monopoly of state owned DoT over DLD has been scrapped. Unrestricted entry will hopefully kick off furious competition. But to make sure this happens, the government must scrap the rule that makes it mandatory for inter-circle players to seek the permission of incumbents before carrying intra-circle calls. The government should privatise overseas monopolist VSNL and open up overseas long distance traffic to unfettered competition. Finally, convergence and the market fluidity that comes with rapid technical change have made separate licences redundant. The government should unify telecom licences. With unrestricted entry and unified licences, companies will compete better and find their niches more effectively.

The Economic Time.

30 AUG 2000

Tatas win case against porn website

SEEEMA KAMDAR
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, Aug. 29. — The White House is not alone in its fight against a pornographic web site usurping its name. In a landmark development for the nascent cyberworld, the Tatas have won a case in international arbitration against a cybersquatter who had registered a pornographic web site with the "tatas" tag. This is the third case concerning domain names.

There are several registered sites whose names are either identical or bear a close resemblance to the name of a well-known company or organisation. Several domain name seekers have bought over the names from the squatters while some sought legal intervention.

The latter becomes difficult particularly because jurisdiction norms and laws on cyberspace are not clear enough. It

was partly because of this and also the fact that Indian courts take a long time to decide a case that the Tata Sons decided to take up its case with the World Intellectual Property Organisation.

Last year, searches on the Internet led the company to *bodacious-tatas.com*, a pornographic site registered with Network Solutions. It sought international arbitration on 23 May. On 18 August, the arbitrator cancelled the registration of *bodacious-tatas.com* on being satisfied that the three criteria prescribed by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers were fulfilled.

The Tatas, which had also urged arbitration in an earlier case, proved that the domain name was identical to their

trademark or service mark. It produced a number of articles which referred to the Tata companies as "Tatas". "This helped in demonstrating the Tatas' wide reach," said Mr Farokh Subedar, head of the Tata Sons' trademarks cell.

The company argued that the prefix *bodacious* was not a sufficient distinction because of the "very high level of goodwill that both Tata and Tatas have acquired".

Secondly, it established that it has rights and legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The arbitrator accepted the Tata Sons' contention that adoption of their domain name helped the site owner cash in on the Tatas' reputation and goodwill.

Thirdly, searches for "Tata" led the user to this pornographic site which

proved that the domain name was registered in bad faith. The arbitrator held providing sexual material under the Tatas' name "is likely to cause bewilderment, if not astonishment, on the part of the customers". Besides, users would find it difficult to accept a company, "having philanthropic concerns", lending its name to "pornography — something which is so contrary to Indian values".

As a precaution, the Tatas had secured an interim injunction from Delhi High Court in October 1999 restraining the site owner from transferring it. The order was binding on the owner and the registering authority, Network Solutions.

Interestingly, the case had a pan-national character. The site had an American address, the complainant was Indian, WIPO is in Switzerland, the case manager was a Pakistani and the arbitrator an Israeli!

THE STATESMAN

20 AUG 2000

'Cabinet to study privatisation of international call segment'

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 3. All aspects of national security will have to be carefully considered before the Government decides to open up the international call segment to private sector, the Union Communications Minister, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, said here today.

Inter-ministerial discussions on the issue have started but the final decision would be taken by the Union Cabinet after considering several integral issues such as national security. "We will have to think about opening international long distance to competition before the WTO-committed date of 2004. There is increasing pressure from foreign companies and this topic comes up in all interaction with telecom companies in my overseas visits," the Minister said.

While expressing his preference for reviewing Government monopoly on international long distance traffic much before the scheduled date of January 1, 2004, Mr. Paswan drew attention to reports that the Defence Ministry was opposed to converting

the telecom department into a corporation as it felt national security in border areas would be compromised. "That is why we will have to tread carefully in this matter," he said.

It may be pertinent to mention that the Army has barred private cellular phone companies from beaming their signals in many border areas in the North-East, Punjab and Rajasthan. A blanket ban prevails on cellular operations in Jammu & Kashmir and the rudimentary radio paging services there are said to be run under the strict supervision of the Army.

Pointing out that the scheduled review date of 2004 "was too far away," the Minister said there were compelling reasons for having an early discussion. People had already started using the internet to make international calls for which they paid just local call charges and soon this practice might become wide-spread to the detriment of the VSNL. "We are monitoring the lines but it is impossible to check such misuse," he said.

Mr. Paswan also felt that out-

going international call rates must be brought down. This issue too was raised during his recent overseas sojourn. The artificially high rates for outgoing calls from India had led to a lop-sided international call structure — with 86 per cent incoming and just 14 per cent outgoing calls — which was resented by foreign operators. "International rates will have to be lowered further," he said.

However, consultations would have to be held with VSNL, which is bound to be the worst-affected and the national security angle too would have to be thoroughly probed, Mr. Paswan added.

UNI reports:

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha Secretariat will bear the cost of the third free phone facility, along with the additional 50,000 calls per annum, to be provided to MPs, the Ministry of Communications said today.

The Ministry said it will not be incurring any expenditure on these telephones and the regular prescribed bills will be issued to and realised from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

THE HINDU

4 JUL 2000

577
40-15
media
PRASAR BHARATI / FEARS OF PRIVATISATION

Plea to reject Sen panel report

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 4. The Shunu Sen Committee report on restructuring Prasar Bharati has run into opposition from a dominant section of Doordarshan/AIR staff which is pressing the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to reject it.

However, with the decision-makers in the Ministry reported to be inclined otherwise, the staff could well be tilting at the windmills.

The main objection to the report is that it seeks to "privatise" Prasar Bharati through the backdoor, but what seems to have really upset the employees is the committee's suggestion for downsizing Prasar Bharati and its proposals relating to recruitment and service conditions.

There is a feeling among the staff that the report projects them as the bane of Prasar Bharati and implies that once they are "straightened out" the rest would take care of itself. Two points in the report have particularly evoked a strong reaction: its stress on hiring staff on a contract basis, and the suggestion that Prasar Bharati should have the power to decide whom it wants to retain from among the existing employees rather giving them the option to choose between Prasar Bharati and their parent organisations.

The suggestion, if accepted, would require an amendment to the Prasar Bharati Act which, in its present form, gives the staff the right to choose between PB and their original departments. Employees say that this violates a Supreme Court judgment of 1996 which forced the Department of Atomic Energy to withdraw a similar proposal relating to the employees of the Nuclear Power Corporation, an autonomous Government body.

The United Forum of Prasar Bharati Employees, which claims to represent nearly a dozen associations of various categories of DD and AIR employees, has given a memorandum to the I&B Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley, listing their objections to the report and urging him to reject it "outright".

A spokesman of the Forum said that they wanted to meet the Minister and explain to him their reservations but so far they had been unsuccessful. He alleged that there was a strong lobby in the Ministry which was pushing the report, and attempts were being made to "co-opt" certain sections of the Prasar Bharati staff. An impression was being created that the staff was in favour of the report, he alleged.

The Forum, in its memorandum, calls the report a "covert plan" to convert Prasar Bharati into a privately owned company and says

the employees are "greatly disappointed" with the committee's approach. "We see a dark future for the Rs. 56,000-crore worth of assets of Prasar Bharati which, we are afraid, will pass into the hands of multinational media barons," the memorandum says.

While acknowledging that Doordarshan and AIR need to be freed from the "shackles" of official control, it argues that the Shunu Sen Committee's prescription is not the right way to go about it. The Prasar Bharati's role as a public broadcaster would be seriously compromised if it is handed over to the "broadcasting bullies of the market".

The Forum has taken exception to the "presumption" that Prasar Bharati lacks in-house talent, and therefore professionals from outside should be brought in on a contract basis. Doordarshan and AIR, it points out, lost credibility not because of a non-performing staff but because officials in key positions developed a vested interest in giving plum assignments to outsiders for a consideration.

"For doing this, in-house productions had to be stopped on the pretext that the staff did not work", it alleges.

Dismissing the committee's labour as a "non-report", it says the panel misled the staff associations about its scope.

THE HINDU

- 5 JUL 2000

Have a phone, bypass ISP to Net

SUBHASISH GUPTA
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, July 6. — Calcutta Telephones has submitted a proposal to the department of telecommunication for an accountless Internet service (AIS).

AIS means a telephone subscriber without an account with an Internet service provider (ISP) can access the Net.

The test run for the scheme is on in Madurai, said officials of DoT. It will be opened to public after DoT clears it.

Mr KR Ramanujan, Calcutta Telephones GM, said the pulse rate for AIS would be lower than ordinary calls. But the total cost would be less because a subscriber wouldn't have to pay an ISP.

How will the scheme benefit a subscriber, especially since some ISPs are offering free Internet service? Mr Ramanujan said the scheme would be particularly useful to casual Net users. A user can skip the formalities of opening an account with an ISP. Besides, few ISPs offer free Net access.

Internet has opened up a sea of innovations. So, many aspects will be considered before giving it a final shape, he said.

THE STATESMAN

7 JUL 2000

CYBER POLICING

Personal Vigilance Is The Answer

By SUDHIR KUMAR JHA

CRIME on the internet, or cyber crime in trendy parlance, is no more confined to the pages of science fiction. It has truly arrived, leaving the law enforcement agencies baffled. This is a new type of cat and mouse game they have not played earlier nor been trained for. Hackers no longer need violent weapons or accomplices to commit felonies. What they need now is a computer, a screen name, and intent to mutilate one or many computer systems.

Anonymity of the internet and its decentralised global nature helps them to manoeuvre through web pages, access credit card numbers and passwords, or just keep on stalking. Often the only clue is their e-mail address. Fraud has always been around; computers give it a new dimension. What if the numbered Swiss accounts can be compromised? The rise in e-commerce, and soon m-commerce, is bound to present a bounty to the scam artist. What is really disturbing is the wide, and ever increasing, scope of crime through the internet. Be it pornography, blackmail, extortion, drug traffic, terrorism or sheer vandalism, a computer can be exploited.

CURIOSITY

Minors attack computer systems out of curiosity, a thirst for knowledge, and while exploring, exceed bounds of what is legal. Adults do it for reasons that can vary from greed to revenge to sheer mischief. Megalomania or delusion of grandeur is at times the driving force. While commercial, military, government and home computers are vulnerable, the easiest targets are often those at educational institutions. Any effort at building the network defences must start with fixing these weakest links. Favourite targets have been the computers in South Korea, China, the Philippines, Russia, Eastern Europe and US. Can India remain unscathed for long?

While the new medium is a haven for criminals, the anonymity of the web cuts both ways. The cloak of electronic facelessness is the perfect tool for police to run decoys and keep an eye on the bad guy. In a case reported from UK, a sleazy character found an underage girl in a chat room on the internet and tried to lure her into having sex at some prearranged location. At the destination a 50-year-old policewoman with a shiny pair of handcuffs greeted him. She was the "young girl" all along. India's police in the metros can take note.

The much-hyped "Love Bug" virus that swept the world recently took the internet world by storm and unnerved the computer security experts. The Philippines police arrested a man suspected of helping to create the crippling virus but had to set him free for want of evidence. Close on the heels came a new and dangerous computer virus dubbed "killer resume". It was so named because it arrived pretending to be a "resume" from a potential job applicant. The virus was carried in a file attached to

an e-mail system using a microsoft outlook programme. In a not-too-late response microsoft has come out with an anti-bug patch which prevents the users from running any "executable" programme attachments to e-mail and flashes a warning if there is an attempt.

The authorities complain that their probe is hampered by a lack of laws covering the new global computer network delaying arrest and allowing the

force, a few lakhs strong, computer literate will be neither easy nor cheap. To start with, specialised cells should be created in the central and state police organisations. The ministry of Home Affairs should take the lead, though there is now a separate ministry of Information Technology. One hopes the IT law-in-making will have enough bite. Success will, however, depend not on the stiff penal provisions but on strict enforcement. Also on the anvil is a convergence law, to be called information, communicator and entertainment bill or some such thing. It has to be ensured that the two laws do not work at cross-purposes.

IT minister Pramod Mahajan has returned from the United States quite taken in with what the Americans are doing in this regard. He is all praise for the FBI-led National Infrastructure Protection Centre he visited in Washington and has proposed a committee on similar lines. He has said nothing about India having something like the

American NetLaw. The central intelligence agencies will have to hone their cyber skill and employ it increasingly for routine espionage and counter-espionage. Surveillance and monitoring will be vital inputs in any future plan for cyber policing.

PRIVACY

The telecommunications and the postal departments intercept transmissions when asked to do so. Why can't there be a law to make the internet service providers install the data equivalent of wiretaps? The tap must, however, be used sparingly as it involves the infringement of citizen's privacy. Sensitive issues such as these, one hopes, have been addressed in the proposed information technology bill. Till such time, and it can be a long time, that the police agencies are geared up, the business houses will have to use the protective and investigative cover made available by the private security agencies. Once having vetted these agencies, the police should cooperate with them rather than making their work difficult.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has assumed the entrepreneurial role of introducing the country's police forces to e-policing. The bureau is in the process of collecting and collating the literature available on cyber crime and distributing the same to the country's police forces in the form of CD-ROM. It has also planned training and orientation programmes for its own and state police officers. The SVP National Police Academy at Hyderabad has also planned special courses in combating Net-crimes for Indian and foreign police officers.

What is required is to generate security awareness among the computer users through a sustained campaign. Personal vigilance will preempt much of the trouble. Keep changing your password. Enjoy online shopping but be discreet in disclosing your credit card number. The computer must remain user-friendly but should have enough built-in safety to deter the prowler. To this end the designers and the security experts must work in tandem.



suspects time to dispose of key evidence. In the United States, the FBI is alarmed at cyber crimes doubling in a year. Their survey of Fortune 500 companies revealed that 62 per cent of all reported computer breaches till date occurred last year. It feels frustrated at not being able to keep up its excellent track record. In his recent testimony before a subcommittee of the US Senate, FBI director Louis Freeh listed lack of manpower, technology (computer architecture), hazy jurisdictional issues and weak laws as the main hindrances to effective cyber policing. He recommended tougher laws including doubling jail time and fine.

The question of jurisdiction is crucial since internet crimes will often cross state and national boundaries. The US proposes to have Law Net, which would be an online investigating agency that could cross local, state and even international borders. It is imperative that not one but all countries have adequate laws and they enter into treaties of mutual cooperation, like the extradition treaties. Interpol is in a unique position to play a pivotal role, both detective and instructive. Its advice should be taken and listened to.

UTILITIES

In India, our economy is going to be driven by e-commerce. Computer is crucial in the running of infrastructure public utilities such as telecom, power and gas distribution, banking, railways and aviation. E-mail is fast replacing fax and conventional mail (derisively called the "snail mail"). And yet, India is only at the threshold of an internet revolution. According to a guesstimate, only about 15 per cent of a million internet connections are at homes. More cyber cafes and information kiosks will come up once the problems of bandwidth shortage and slow dial-up connections are taken care of. This gives us time, but not much time, to put our cyber policing in place.

Fortunately, so far nothing more serious than software piracy and theft of internet time has been reported to the police. To make our large police

The author is a former Director General of Police, Bihar.

THE STATESMAN

14 JUL 2000

CONCERN OVER GROWING DIGITAL DIVIDE

Long-distance telephony to be opened up: PM

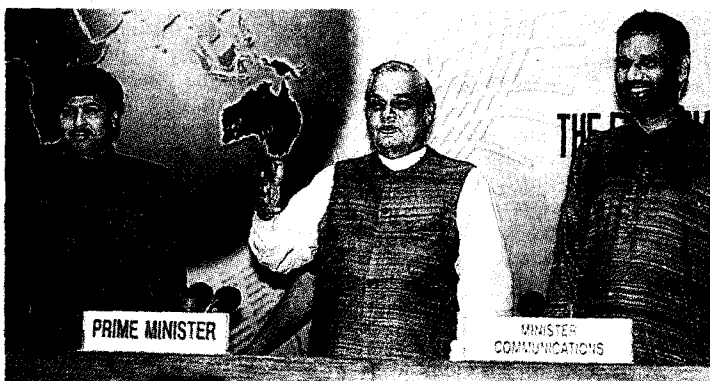
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 15. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, today signalled his impatience with the slow pace of reforms in the telecom and IT sectors, announcing three landmark initiatives. These include decisions on opening national long distance (NLD) communications by August 15 with no restriction on the number of players, allowing internet companies to tap international cables without approaching the public sector Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and improving the education infrastructure to deliver more IT professionals.

Interestingly, all these issues are being discussed at inter-ministerial level for quite some time. This was noted by the Prime Minister who said there was no place for a rigid departmental mindset on the part of officials in this sunrise sector.

Expressing concern at the growing digital divide between computer literates and others, the Prime Minister unveiled a common action plan to be implemented jointly by States and the Centre. These decisions are expected to not only strengthen the telecom infrastructure but also percolate the computer revolution down to villages. The 13-point action plan includes a special rate for internet access, no sales tax on IT sector for the next three to five years, promotion of e-governance and a host of education related measures.

Mr. Vajpayee was speaking at a one-day conference of State IT Ministers which virtually turned



The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, with the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Information Technology, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, and the Union Minister for Telecommunications, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, at the first conference of State IT Ministers in New Delhi on Saturday. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarty

into a conference of Chief Ministers. As many as 14 Chief Ministers including Mr. M. Karunanidhi, Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu, Mr. S.M. Krishna and Mr. E.K. Nayanar were present. At least six Chief Ministers called up the Union Information Technology Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, to express their inability to attend.

The Prime Minister also took note of the fact that so many Chief Ministers had retained the IT portfolio saying this showed that States had responded enthusiastically to the opportunities offered by IT and were straining to cash in on the boom. The heavy presence of Chief Ministers was proof that the desire to develop IT was no longer confined to any particular political party. "IT has transcended even ideological barriers. I only wish that all of us could

develop a similar enthusiasm and determination to achieve speedy results in other areas of economic and social development," he said.

Apart from making these epoch-making announcements, the Prime Minister commented on the slow pace of decision-making at the ministry level which had led to deadlines for liberalisation being missed in the past.

DTH broadcast

Such was the enthusiasm for IT that the conference, destined to end up as another footnote, took several other decisions on the sidelines such as limited opening of the direct-to-home broadcasting on the so far banned KU band. The Centre has decided to allow "Government-to-home" broadcasting for educational and health purposes, said Mr. Mahajan while briefing newsmen after the

conference. The Minister said a task force to accelerate IT education with a view to doubling the intake of engineers by 2001 and tripling it next year would be set up soon. Comprising Ministers of Human Resource Development, IT and Finance, its mandate would be to turn out a higher number of software professionals to meet the growing global demand as well as domestic needs.

The Chief Ministers expressed impatience at the many hurdles in the telecom sector and pressed for their speedy resolution to remove problems such as congestion in accessing internet and the relatively high telecom tariff. The tone for a free exchange of views was virtually set by Chief Ministers from the southern States who chafed at the VSNL's monopoly and strongly pressed for a more liberalised telecom sector.

Mr. Karunanidhi and Mr. Chandrababu Naidu felt the mindset should change and the Centre must pursue deregulation policies which will ultimately encourage flat rate local charges, provide international dialling in all exchanges and give bandwidth to internet and telecom companies on demand. "Innovative financing models and greater public-private partnerships for the spread of knowledge-based activity in the country is the need of the hour," said Mr. Karunanidhi.

The Kerala Chief Minister, Mr. E. K. Nayanar, spoke about the soon-to-be-launched programme "Information Kerala" which aims to computerise major services and functions at the panchayat

THE HINDU

16 JUL 2000

Bill to curb obscene advertising soon

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 18

A BILL to amend the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 will be introduced in the monsoon session of the Parliament.

The decision to amend the Act follows a Cabinet decision taken here today. Aimed at effectively and uniformly enforcing Broadcasting and Advertising Code on all the channels, the measure is expected to stop obscene advertising on all television channels across the country.

The Government has also advised TV channels to observe restraint in using gods and prophets belonging to various religions while accepting advertisements for their channels.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mr Arun Jaitley informed the Parliamentary Consultative committee about this

today. The amended Act, Mr Jaitley said, would empower the Government to ban the rogue channels on the charge of showing obscene programmes.

The amendments also provide for making it mandatory for all cable operators to telecast at least three DD channels, Mr Jaitley said.

In a departure from the erstwhile practice of State Governments authorising an officer, the amended Act incorporates that the authorised officers to enforce the Act be designated within the Act itself.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 JUL 2000

IT PRIORITIES

4
4/ THE SPEED AT which the Government can take decisions if it wants to was in evidence at the first conference of State Government Information Technology Ministers, where the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, announced two major decisions and the gathering adopted a wide-ranging, 13-point action plan to promote IT in industry, governance and education. One wishes though that the Central and State Governments could display the same urgency and sense of purpose in other areas as they are showing in what is now the Cinderella sector of the country. Besides, one can justifiably argue that some of the bigger obstacles to the spread of IT in the country were largely ignored at the meeting.

The most important decision to emerge from the conference was the one that had been taken beforehand by the Prime Minister's Office and was only announced at the gathering, and is only tangentially related to IT — there is the promise that by Independence Day subscribers will be able to choose a service provider other than the DoT/MTNL for making long distance calls. This particular aspect of telecom deregulation has had a chequered history and not all the difficult issues have been settled by the Prime Minister's announcement. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in its first avatar earlier this year recommended that national long distance (NLD) services should be opened up to private competition, that there should be no limits on the number of providers and that entry should be based on payment of a fixed fee. The new TRAI examined the issue afresh and recently made its own recommendations: only four providers in each telecom circle and revenue-sharing should be the norm. For good measure it also recommended against new entrants providing intra-circle long distance services — though this segment constitutes close to half of all long distance telecom traffic. Now the Government has decided to go back partially to the first TRAI decision and allow unlimited entry while sticking to a revenue-sharing contract. But

HO-12 20/7
there is complete silence on whether or not the new entrants can operate in the profitable intra-circle business. Until this issue is sorted out one should not attach any operational meaning to the latest deregulation in the telecom sector. The second major decision — permitting Internet service providers to obtain international bandwidth via submarine cable carriers — should lead to a major improvement in the speed of connectivity. This decision was certainly required since there was an imbalance in the earlier regulatory regime which allowed ISPs access to international bandwidth only via the slower satellite links. But again while there is more than one global provider of undersea access, the Government has chosen to interpret this decision in terms of directing the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. to abrogate its contract of exclusivity with one particular company. Old habits obviously die hard in such governmental interference in a public sector company that is supposed to enjoy autonomy.

The constraints on bandwidth do at present limit connectivity speeds. But there are other factors which inhibit the very spread of the Internet in the country. A variant of the telecom sector's last-mile problem makes the connection poor in quality and expensive in price. Neither was directly addressed at the IT conference. The other issue is, of course, the "digital divide" which was the subject of customary homilies by both the Prime Minister and some of the Chief Ministers and State IT ministers. Bridging this divide requires first and foremost a manifold increase in the telephone density. Yet, this issue remained on the sidelines. To cite just one example, the many issues raised in a recent consultative paper by the TRAI on the financing and fulfilment of the universal service obligation (USO) in telecom services — of immediate importance because they concern rural telephony — were completely ignored at this conference convened to discuss, among other things, how to spread Internet usage in the country.

Bill on action against obscene channels

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 22. — In the same way that the amended Cable Act allows a senior government official to take action against an offensive channel, the Communications Bill 2000 has special provisions that will allow government officials to come down heavily on 'offenders'.

The Cable Act was amended to stop TB-6, a channel that reportedly showed pornographic films, said one official. It has since been strengthened and now, a senior government official can take action after receiving complaints.

Sources said there was difficulty in banning TB-6 and strengthening the Act was necessary. On the possibility of misuse by motivated political leaders or their minions, an official said: "It does not mean that someone is sitting with a lathi to look at the channels."

The 'action' that the Communications Bill

speaks of is more wide-ranging and could mean stopping transmission, intercepting or detaining messages or information — meaning telephone calls and perhaps TV or radio programmes. But messages by accredited correspondents are exempt.

The issues that can force officers to take action will have to be in the "interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, state security, friendly relations with foreign states, public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence."

The Communications Bill, the Centre's version of convergence (the Information, Communication and Entertainment Bill being the industry's version), says action can be taken in case of "wire communication," "oral communication" and "electronic communication." This appears to suggest that telephone conversations can be intercepted, as can conversations or transfer of electronic signals.

After receiving the complaint and other

relevant information, the "competent" authority can approve interception of "wire, electronic or oral communications" if it is in the national interest, if he believes more information will be available, if normal methods of inquiry and Intelligence gathering have failed.

The competent authority has to mention in detail the interception and then submit a copy of the order to the review committee within a week of the order. The interception period cannot be longer than 60 days though extensions are possible. In case of an emergency, an officer not below the rank of additional DGP may authorise action.

But every authorisation order will have to be reviewed at the central or state levels. The central review committee will consist of the Cabinet secretary, the home secretary at the Centre and the secretary in charge of the legal affairs department or legislative department in the law, justice and company affairs ministry.

THE STATESMAN

23 JUL 2000

Cabinet approves direct uplinking by foreign media

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 25

THE CENTRE today decided to allow foreign media companies and joint ventures with Indian partners to directly uplink and broadcast live television programmes. This will obviate the need for them to depend on Doordarshan or the Department of Space for transponder space.

Until now, only 100 per cent Indian-owned companies, such as Jain TV, were allowed to uplink directly. The decision will have a significant impact on foreign TV and broadcasting companies.

These companies have so far had to send their programmed videotapes to their base stations either in Singapore or Hong Kong for telecast. The internet was also being used for transmitting programmes to be beamed in India.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Arun Jaitley will introduce the new uplinking policy in the Parliament in the next two days. The Group of Ministers (GoM) had earlier cleared this policy that promises to "revolutionise broadcasting by foreign channels", sources said.

Information Technology Minister Pramod Mahajan said the extent of foreign equity allowed and other norms will be part of the policy.

The Cabinet has also allowed the Indian Railways to make a foray into the multi-media and telecom areas in a big way by utilising the uninterrupted right of way over 62,800 km of its network over 7,000 stations. Under the administrative control of the Indian Railways, a Broadband Telecom and Multi-media Corporation will be set up with an authorised capital of Rs 1,000 crore.

The corporation will help the Railways to modernise its train control operations and safety systems. It will also create a nationwide broadband telecom and multi-media network backbone.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 JUL 2000

Govt lifts ban on satellite photos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

THE government has lifted the ban on the sale of high definition American satellite photographs whose distribution had earlier been prohibited in the country on national security considerations.

From a height of 700 kilometers the satellite called "IKONOS" can take pictures of objects as small as a bicycle tyre. Indian defence ministry had objected to distribution of IKONOS imageries fearing they might compromise national security by revealing secret defence installations.

The ban has now been lifted following an agreement reached on July 12 between India's Department of Space (DoS) and the US com-

pany "Space Imaging" which operates the IKONOS satellite. From the Indian side, the agreement was signed by DoS chairman K Kasturirangan during his visit to the United States earlier this month.

The signing of the agreement marks the end of a nine-month long tussle between the state of Andhra Pradesh which wanted to purchase the imageries and the Central Government which was concerned about the security implications.

In October 1999, Chandrababu Naidu government had placed a Rs 50 million worth order for the IKONOS imageries of the entire Andhra Pradesh coast for use in its cyclone hazard mitigation project. But the defence ministry had stopped the deal as it felt the

photographs would expose vital military installations along the coast.

The agreement signed this month has lifted the ban and paved the way for Andhra Pradesh to revive the cyclone mitigation project which has been in limbo for the last nine months.

Under this agreement with Space Imaging, the US company will market IKONOS products in India only through Antrix Corporation — the commercial arm of DoS — and not sell them directly to users as it had originally intended. And Antrix will have the imageries distributed to users by the National Remote Sensing Agency in Hyderabad, after blackening out areas which the defence ministry considered sensitive.

INDIAN EXPRESS

REUTERS
LAS VEGAS, JULY 29

THE largest-ever convention of computer hackers opened here on Friday with top-ranking US military officials offering to hire the elite of the cybervandal world and put them to work defending against foreign government attacks.

"I invite you to join the government, or private industry for that matter. But get on the defence side," Art Money, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defence, and the Pentagon's Chief Information Officer with responsibility for command, control, communications and intelligence.

Money and a panel of colleagues from the Pentagon, the Air Force and Federal police agencies, were at turns cordial, threatening, moralizing and patriotic in their remarks to the conference, called DEF CON 8.0, which has drawn up to 5,000 attendees this year.

"If you are thinking about what you want to do the rest of your life, then ... maybe you want to come work with us," Money told a standing-room crowd of hundreds of hackers who paid rapt attention to his comments and let out only an occasional jeer.

Money took the audience to task for irresponsible break-ins, citing a little-publicised break-in to a military hospital two years ago in which he said data on the blood supply was tampered with, putting lives at risk before it was uncovered.

The surprise appearance by

US military breaks into hackers' convention

high-ranking military officials at the once underground event now turned media spectacle highlighted the seriousness with which U.S. authorities view what they classify as information warfare threats, from incidents of Web site vandalism and computer virus scares to unspecified state-sponsored threats to na-

stretch up to two or three year prison sentences for some hacking activities.

"Maybe (it's) because people are just growing up."

The three-day conference includes sessions devoted to cloaking one's identity, network "lock-picking," how to break into every major software system

semi-legal sessions of past years and were focused on provoking hackers to think more broadly about the consequences of their actions.

"Corporate America is interested in this stuff," said Moss, who himself started out as a teenage hacker breaking into phone systems and university

Get on our side, Pentagon tells the elite of the cybervandal world at DEF CON 8.0, once an underground convention for break-in artists, now a mainstream event

tional security.

It also showcased the transformation of DEF CON, as the eight-year-old gathering is known, from a controversial summer camp for teenage and twenty-something computer break-in artists with criminal arrest records into a mainstream event drawing thousands of professional network security managers with responsible corporate or government jobs.

"There's a lot of people just sitting on the fence," said DEF-CON founder and organiser Jeff Moss.

"Sooner or later you understand there's a limited life span to doing this stuff," Moss said of criminal penalties that can now

available, including residential, corporate and government networks.

It also involves plenty of poolside lounging, drunken parties, social mixing and antic behaviour from a crowd that — at its extremes — has a variety of participants with neon green hair and one fellow in military fatigues and a helmet sprouting deer antlers.

Moss, 30, told reporters afterward that the focus of this year's conference was heavily skewed toward technical issues and meant to discourage those with half-hearted interest in complex computer security.

He said organisers had deliberately downplayed some of the

computers but later became a consultant for Secure Computing Corp, a major computer security firm.

"It's not just for kiddies anymore," he said.

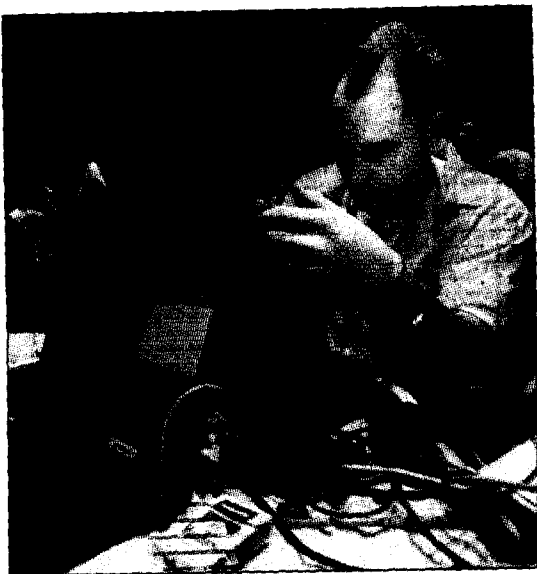
Internet security and the vulnerability of individual, business, government and even military computers to attack has become a daily topic of media coverage worldwide.

This year's attacks on major web sites and a wave of computer virus attacks that have infected millions of computers has elevated many of the habitués of the hacker underworld to the status of counter-cultural celebrities on a par with rock stars and leading social activists.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Pentagon goes to cybervandals' summit with recruitment forms

If you can't hack 'em, hire 'em



A hacker at the Las Vegas convention. (Reuters)

FROM K.P. NAYAR

Washington, July 29: After fighting an increasingly difficult battle against computer hackers and other cybervandals for years, the establishment in America has decided to set the thief to catch the thief.

The Pentagon's elite shocked cybervandals when it turned up in force at their 5,000-strong convention in Las Vegas not to intimidate or charge them, but to invite these hackers to join the establishment in fighting information technology chaos.

"If you are thinking of what you want to do for the rest of your life, then maybe you want to come and work with us," Art Money, assistant secretary for defence, told DEF CON 8.0, a hitherto underground event held annually to get together those who have perfected computer break-ins. "I invite you to join

industry for

that matter. But get on the defence side."

Reports from the convention said Money was very persuasive, citing unpublicised computer break-ins, such as one in a military hospital where blood sample data was altered, to press his point.

He was joined by representatives from the US air force, navy and federal police agencies. As Money spoke, a recruiting officer from the US navy distributed papers among the delegates, inviting them to join the defence forces. But reports said there were, as yet, no takers.

This year's DEF CON also drew top executives from the private sector offering jobs to cybervandals in an obvious effort to save their computer networks from virus attacks and hacking which have caused record losses and disruption of business this year.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►

US bid to hire hackers

► FROM PAGE 1

What persuaded the establishment in America to set the thief to catch the computer thieves was probably the fate of Jeff Moss, the founder of DEF CON eight years ago.

Moss, a teenage hacker, now 30, has become a consultant for Secure Computing Corporation, a leading computer security firm.

He was quoted at this year's convention as saying: "It is not just for kiddies any more. Sooner or later you understand there is a limited life span for doing this stuff".

The three-day event has sessions on picking network locks, cloaking the identity of hackers, and advice on breaking into every major software system.

A popular event at previous gatherings has been a competition to spot government agents infiltrating DEF CON, but the contest petered out this year with Money and others openly appearing at the venue and seeking the floor.

THE TELEGRAM

...ment is short.

Long-distance logjam

THE FOUR-month old self-imposed ban on carrying forward the telecom tariff rebalancing exercise expires on July 31. There is still no word from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on this matter. In April 1999, the old TRAI, after a two-year public debate and a discussion paper, had initiated a tariff revision to be implemented over a three-year time-frame envisaging a 45 per cent reduction in domestic long-distance and international long-distance telephone tariffs. At the end of March this year, the second instalment of rebalancing to effect a further 15 per cent cut in the tariffs was due. But the new TRAI kept it in abeyance on the advice that the profits of the incumbent monopoly, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), would erode further. It was widely believed that the four-month period would be used by the TRAI to review the claims of DoT/MTNL that tariff cuts would lead to losses.

The very decision to keep the tariff rebalancing in abeyance suggests that the regulator is inclined to protect the DoT's profits. That such a course of action is flawed is evident from the fact that even today Indian subscribers pay one of the highest rates for STD and ISD calls in the world. Strangely, no new evidence has been produced to suggest that the tariff cuts of the previous year had resulted in loss of monopoly profits. For instance, the state-owned MTNL operating in Delhi and Mumbai recorded a 32.6 per cent increase in net profits during 1999-2000 after tariff cuts were initiated in April 1999. Even VSNL, the monopoly which routes all international calls, reported a rise in business. Incidentally, MTNL and VSNL together account for nearly 37 per cent of DoT's revenue.

As per official calculations, the DoT gets a profit margin of over 60 per cent in STD calls. Against an estimated revenue of Rs 17,700 crore, DoT's surplus was over Rs 7,500 crore. Long-distance services alone fetch revenues exceeding Rs 12,000 crore. The high price elasticity of the long-distance market has been proved by tariff cuts. With the Prime Minister announcing the opening up of the long-distance telecom market to the private sector, the regulator should be expected to dismantle the telephone tariff barriers. The success of India becoming an IT superpower lies in providing quality telecom services at competitive rates.