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विदेश रान्य मंत्री एवं
संसदीय कार्य रान्य मंत्री
Minister of State for External Affairs &
Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs
Government of India

MOS/15/2020/

17 November 2020

Respected Sm. Javadekarji
Namaskaram

This is to bring your goodself's kind attention to the following aspects relating to the closure of the 200 KW Alappuzha (Alleppey) medium wave Transmission station, as per order dated 06.11.2020 issued by the Director General, Prasar Bharati.

- The above referred 200 KW transmitter in Alappuzha was the sole source for transmission to 93% of the territory of Kerala and the regions of Lakshadweep, Kavarathi, Tirunelveli and Madurai which are regions located outside the state. Currently the 20 KW transmitter located in Trivandrum broadcasting station, is only capable of providing coverage to a small area of the state. Therefore, closure of the 200 KW Alappuzha transmission station will blackout the radio transmission in the said areas drastically.
- After closure of 200 KW medium wave transmission there will be only a 2 KW FM transmitter at Alappuzha station, and that too without proper antenna system for smooth transmission. If AIR broadcasting is blacked out it will only help the private FM broadcasters in the area, and there is a suspicion that the present decision has been taken hastily in order to help the private players.
- The decision to wind up the historic radio transmission from Alappuzha has been taken without putting in place any alternative arrangement to cater to the interest of devoted listeners.
- Alappuzha radio station is situated at most prominent location as regards the disaster management is concerned. This transmitter is also the sole media available to fishermen who undertake

voyages to the Arabian sea. It has also been of immense help during disasters like the 2018 floods.

- This station has been a very important source of information and entertainment for the people of Kerala and faraway places like Lakshadweep, Thirunelveli and Madurai. In a situation where phones and wifi connections were cut, the news from Akashvani was the only source of information to the people.
- Hon'ble Prime Minister, in his recent speeches, has exhorted for strengthening and development of Akashvani. He had urged to take steps to increase reach and popularity of AIR among common people. The above referred decision taken by Prasar Bharati to close down a very popular transmitting station is contrary to the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister.
- Without the Alappuzha transmission station in place, various prestigious and important central government programmes including the Hon'ble Prime Minister's "Mann ki Baat" could not be broadcasted to a large section of the people of Kerala.
- Listeners strength of the Alappzha transmission station is very high, and many of them are solely depend on radio transmission from this station for current affairs and news. The regular listeners community are very sad as a result of this decision.

In this connection it is also brought to your kind attention that FM radio station at Alappuzha is still remaining in the very old starting state. The strength of the signal is too weak even for the city coverage. Antenna tower is also not constructed till date.

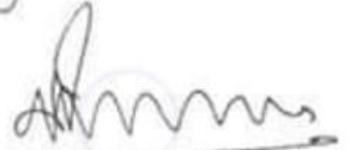
Serious dearth of technological upgradation and modernization is also evident in other radio stations in Kerala. The transmitters installed at AIR stations viz. Alappuzha, Thrissur and Kozhikode have already crossed its expiry date. Crucial spare parts for maintenance of those transmitters are also not available which hamper the smooth broadcasting. If steps are taken for establishment of DRM transmitters, which is far better than FM transmitters, it will be immensely beneficial to AIR to reach more people.

At this juncture it is also very pertinent to observe that out of the 51 transmitters in operation throughout the country all

transmitters except Alappuzha, Thrissur, Kozhikode and Gorakhpur got replaced with new transmitters of high power, during 2013-2016. It is reported that though Rs. 8 Crore has been allotted for replacement of the said 3 transmitters in Kerala, the fund was not released yet.

In the said backdrop, it is most humbly requested that the decision to close down the 200 KW Alappuzha medium wave transmission station may kindly be deferred/cancelled, and expeditious steps may also be taken at your end for emergency financial sanction for modernization and technological upgradation of Alappuzha, Thrissur and Kozhikode stations, especially for the replacement of AM transmitters installed thereat, in order to make the said stations state of the art and up to date.

With warm regards.



(V. Muraleedharan)

Shri. Prakash Javadekar
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