

URGENT

**No.31-9/2004/NDM-II
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs**

North Block, New Delhi,
Dated the 26th November, 2004

Subject: Promotion of Amateur Radio (Ham Radio) for Emergency preparedness and response – BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Kind reference is invited to this Ministry's earlier meeting notice of even number dated 2nd August 2004 and the subsequent OM of even number dated 9th August 2004, informing therewith the postponement of the meeting scheduled on 10th August on the subject cited above.

2. The undersigned is directed to say that in the event of disasters of severe magnitude, it has generally been observed that the normal communication channels break down. In such situations Ham Radio operators can play a key role as was observed during Orissa Super Cyclone, 1999 and Bhuj Earthquake, 2001.

3. Although there are a number of Amateur Radio Societies/Clubs in the country, which pursue use of Ham Radio as hobby, there has not been any well-organized effort to focus on the use of this facility for emergency preparedness and response. Although, Ham Radio operators sometimes voluntarily come forward to assist in such situations, there is a need to establish institutional mechanism for use of this facility during post disaster emergency response. In order to promote Ham Radio systems and evolve a greater number of persons in this activity, the youth in country as well as the Response Managers/volunteers have to be encouraged to take it up as a hobby.

4. The Department of Information Technology has already taken some steps to promote use of Ham Radios including a project for establishing Ham radio stations in various parts of the Country. It may be considered to promote Ham radio in the youth development schemes, higher technical education institutions, civil defence etc. Manufacturing of Ham sets in technical institutes may also be considered for easy availability of Ham sets.

5. The Disaster Management Division in the Ministry of Home Affairs would like to explore the possibility of developing a roadmap for promotion of Amateur Radio in the country, which can be used as an effective communication for emergency preparedness and response. With this objective in view, a brainstorming session is scheduled to be held in the conference hall of National Institute of Disaster Management, IIPA Campus, IP Estate, Outer Ring Road, New Delhi (Tel: 2370 2433 Fax: 2370 2442) on 06.12.2004 from 10:30 – 13:30 hours.

6. It is requested that your Ministry/Organisation may kindly depute an officer to participate in the discussions so as to facilitate development of a roadmap in this regard.

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To

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[Tel: 080-2341 5241 Fax: 080-2341 5328]
2. Secretary, Ministry of Defence, South Block, New Delhi. [Fax: 2301 0044]
3. Secretary, Deptt. of Secondary & Higher Education, Ministry of HRD, Shastri Bhavan,
New Delhi. [Tel: 2338 6451, 2338 2698 Fax: 2338 5807]
4. Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management, IIPA Campus, IP Estate,
Outer Ring Road, New Delhi. [Tel: 2370 2443 Fax: 2370 2442]
5. Joint Secretary (YA), Deptt. of Youth Affairs & Sports,
Ministry of HRD, Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi. [Tel: 2338 2897, Fax: 2338 7418]
6. Department of Information Technology,
(Shri R.K. Arora, Senior Director), Electronics Niketan,
CGO Complex, New Delhi. [Tel: 2436 3121 Fax: 2436 3083, 2436 3134]
7. Department of Telecommunication [Shri P.K. Garg, Wireless Advisor]
Sanchar Bhavan, New Delhi. [Tel: 2375 5420 Fax: 2371 6111]
8. Dte. General (Civil Defence & Home Guards),
[Lt. Col. J R Kaushik, ADG]
R.K. Puram, New Delhi. [Tel: 2671 2851 Fax: 2671 2798]
9. DCPW (Shri Kamalesh Deka, Director),
CGO Complex, New Delhi. [Tel: 2436 1561 Fax: 2436 2769]
10. DDG, Confederation of Indian Industries, 23, Lodi Institutional area (CII)
[Tel: 24601182 Fax: 24633168/ 24626149]
11. Divisional Commissioner, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, 5, Shamnath Marg, New Delhi
12. Managing Director, Orissa State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA), Rajiv
Bhavan, Bhubaneswar
13. Chief Executive Officer, Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA),
Block-11, Udyog Bhavan, Gandhinagar [Fax: 079 23259275]
14. Principal Secretary (DM), Govt. of Uttaranchal, Dehradun
15. Commissioner (DM), Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad
16. NCSTC & Vigyan Prasara Amateur Radio Club, C-24, ASCI Building, New Delhi-16.
Tel: 26864103, 6967532, Fax: 26965986
17. National Institute of Amateur Radio, Rajiv Bhavan, Hyderabad
18. Amateur Radio Society of India, 4, Kurla Industrial Estate, Ghatkopar,
Mumbai-86.
19. Mumbai Amateur Radio Society, 15/60, Matru mandir, 278, Tardeo road, Mumbai-7.
20. Gujarat Institute of Amateur Radio, 64/1, "GH" Type, Sector-23, Gandhinagar.
Phone: (079) 2323 73 88
21. Amateur Radio Society of India, Ghalib Apartments, Parwana Road, Pitampura,
Delhi-34. Tel: 27018572

Brief record of the discussions held during the Brainstorming session 'To promote Amateur Radio in the Country' on 6.12.2004

A brainstorming session was organized on December 6th, 2004 by National Disaster Management Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs to explore the possible ways for promoting Amateur (Ham) Radio in the Country and developing a National roadmap for promotion of Amateur Radio in the country, which can be used as an effective mode of communication during emergency response.

This half-day brainstorming session was attended by the representatives from WPC Wing (DOT), Dept. of IT (MCIT), Dept. of Space, Dept. of Secondary and Higher Education (MoHRD), Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Indian Army, Civil Defence (MHA), Directorate of Coordination and Police Wireless (MHA), Vigyan Prasar (DST), Govt. of Delhi, Govt. of Orissa, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Govt. of Uttaranchal, Confederation of Indian Industries, Amateur Radio Society of India, National Institute of Amateur Radio, Mumbai Amateur Radio Society and Gujarat Institute of Amateur Radio, National Institute of Disaster Management and MHA. ED NIDM welcomed the participants of the session and narrated the importance of the subject with reference to disaster management. Director (Disaster Management), MHA emphasized the much needed promotion of Amateur Radio in the Country as a mainstream activity in the education and youth development schemes. Corporate sectors may promote this under their corporate volunteering programmes. It was also highlighted that the age-old rules & regulations pertaining to Amateur Radio in India would have to be reviewed on a priority basis and time-bound action plan should be developed on the basis of the recommendations made by the Amateur Radio societies and concerned Ministries.

A presentation was made by MHA representative spelling out the views of Ministry of Home Affairs for promoting Amateur Radio in the Country as one of the reliable modes of communication for use during emergencies. National Emergency Communication Plan of the Government of India aims to promote Amateur Radio in all the States/UTs particularly in most hazard prone Districts. Dept. of IT (DIT) is also assisting projects for popularizing Amateur Radio activities throughout the country. It has been planned to establish total 30 Amateur Radio stations and train 30 volunteers per station per year under this scheme.

The participants from various Ministries shared their views on this matter. Shri C. Rama Rao, Assistant Wireless Adviser to the Govt. of India, WPC Wing informed that WPC/DOT is now considering an amendment of the Indian Wireless Telegraph (Amateur

Service) Rules 1978 (which was last amended in 1984). It is proposed to have only two categories of Amateur Radio licences in India, i.e. 'Restricted Grade' and a 'General Grade' licence. Dr. Mahanti and Shri Sandeep Baruah from Vigyan Prasar explained the activities undertaken by National Council for Science & Technology Communications & Vigyan Prasar Amateur Radio Club (VU2NCT). Representatives of Amateur Radio societies highlighted the difficulties in promotion of HAM activities as a hobby among youth and professionals in the society. Noble contributions of HAM in past disasters were acknowledged and it was noted that issues in the field of promotion of HAM in the country ought to be resolved in a time-bound manner.

It was noted that following are the main bottlenecks in Amateur Radio promotion:

1. Long delay in obtaining a license.
2. Restrictions like the permissions involved in Amateur Radio operation (for portable operation, mobile operation, field day operation, awareness programmes, expeditions, dxpedition, reciprocal operations, car rallies etc.).
3. Customs duty imposed on Amateur Radio equipments (those that come under the HS Code 852520 04).
4. Mandatory requirement of the knowledge of Morse Code etc.

In order to develop a road map for Amateur Radio promotion in India, it was decided that HAM as an activity should be mainstreamed and national work-plan could be developed with three broad objectives:

1. Educational institutions promote Amateur Radio as a hobby and skill development activity.
2. Youth development programmes include Amateur Radio as a social service and professional development activity.
3. Related Legal/Security/Regulatory aspects reviewed to promote Amateur Radio in India.

Based on the discussion, following work-plan has emerged:

1. Amateur Radio should be promoted as an extra curricula activity in educational institutions at all levels. MoHRD may issue necessary guidelines to all State Governments and Universities.
2. Amateur Radio activity should be assigned weightage like NCC and other activities so as to attract students. MoHRD may consider issue necessary guidelines.

3. Amateur Radio clubs may be established in the educational institutions so as to provide immediate facilities for students for learning and become a HAM (Amateur Radio operator).
4. Government, public and private employees should be granted special casual leave to be able to operate Amateur Radio during emergency situations.
5. All youth development programmes should include HAM both as social service and professional development activity. This may be included in the schemes and programmes meant for youth development and promotion in organisations like NYKS, NSS and NCC etc.
6. The licensing procedure for Amateur Radio operators after they have successfully passed the examination should be reviewed to make it more popular. The examination system for Amateur Radio operators before they obtain license should be decentralized enabling more institutions to conduct the exam.

It was decided that the Ministries/Departments/Agencies mandate to work in the above will take lead after the action plan is finalised.

A: Promotion of Amateur Radio in education and as a creative hobby

1. Ministry of Human Resource Development

- a. to review existing schemes and guidelines and include Amateur Radio as an extra-curricular activity in educational institutions at all levels including technical education.
- b. Greater awareness should be created with the help of HRD in Central sponsored schools, colleges, and technical institutes, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Central Schools, National Institute of Teachers Training & Research (NITTR).
- c. Incentive Scheme for students in terms of weightage assigned to HAM activity like NCC and other activities.
- d. Availability of resources for establishing Amateur Radio Club Station in every school/college/tech. Institutes.

2. State Disaster Management/Relief/ Revenue depts.

- a. Promote Amateur Radio in the States.
3. DOPT (GOI) and State Govts provide for Special casual leave for Govt. employees to operate Amateur Radio during emergency situations.
4. EduSat (ISRO) channel to be used for Amateur Radio activity

5. Amateur Television Amateur Radio Satellite and digital mode of communication should be promoted to get people more interested.

B: Promotion of Amateur Radio in the volunteer groups under various youth development schemes

1. Funds for establishment of Club Stations for practicing of Licensed Volunteers.
2. Training of volunteers under National Service Scheme, NYKS, NCC and BSG in the local states for tanning.

C: Amateur Radio promotion and related legal/security/ regulatory aspects

1. Expediting of issuing of licenses.
2. Passport be considered as basis of verification. A verification certificate by a gazetted officer of level of director & above may be considered for verification and provisional license to be issued.
3. Custom duty for importing the Amateur Radio equipment should be waived off.
4. Age limit for the license should be reduced to 10 years as entry age.
5. Issuance of mobile HAM licenses to institutions and organizations.
6. Exemption of electronics & communication subject in Amateur Radio license examination for the Diploma/Engineering/ITI (electronics)/BSC electronics

It was concluded that the present constraints of promoting Amateur Radio in the country can be minimized by amending the existing Amateur Radio policy with due cooperation from the concerned Ministries. Dept. of Telecom, Ministry of HRD, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Dept. of Science & Technology, Ministry of Finance etc. will have a major role to play in finalising the National Roadmap for promoting this activity.

Session was ended with thanks to the chair and participants.