

kms to 5.0 kms from the nearest telephone exchange for provision of telephone connections where such demands exist.

(ii) BSNL has signed an agreement with USOF (Universal Service Obligation Fund) of DoT in November 2004 for providing VPT (Village Public Telephones) facilities to the left out undisputed revenue villages having population more than 100 progressively by November 2007. As on June, 30, 2006, 38, 475 VPTs have been provided by BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) out of the total number of 41.077 villages in Bihar.

(iii) Most of the demands for telephone connections are from scattered and far flung rural areas where provision of telephone connection are not feasible on wireline due to techno-economic reason. To overcome these shortcomings, BSNL has planned a large WLL network to cover all the SDCAs (Short Distance Charging Areas) in the country including Bihar for provision of telephone connection in remote rural areas. As on June, 30, 2006, all the 104 SDCAs of Bihar have been covered by WLL (Wireless in Local Loop). Moreover, under the umbrella coverage, BSNL has planned to provide three BTSs (Base Terminal Stations) per SDCAs, which will facilitate to provide telephone connections almost on demand.

(iv) BSNL has planned to cover all the villages having population more than 5000 by cellular mobile services. As on June, 30, 2006, 1209 villages have been covered by mobile services out of the total number of 3186 villages having population more than 5000 in Bihar.

In addition BSNL is deploying mobile network in all the National and State Highway, Railway routes and Pilgrim Centres in Bihar. Due to these coverages by mobile services many villages are getting incidental coverage of cellular service. As on June, 30, 2006, 10013 villages in Bihar are getting such incidental coverage by mobile service.

### **3G Spectrum Allocation**

1668. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:—

(a) whether Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has sought views of stakeholders on the contentious issue of 3G spectrum allocation and pricing;

(b) if so, whether TRAI has received views of stakeholders on this issue;

(c) whether after taking note of constraints faced by telecom companies in maintaining telecom growth despite limited spectrum, PM assured telecom operators of releasing additional spectrum for commercial use;

(d) if so, whether on the intervention of Prime Minister, an additional spectrum is being released for commercial use; and

(e) if so, by when the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD):** (a) Yes, Sir. TRAI released a Consultation Paper on "Allocation and pricing of spectrum for 3G Services and Broadband wireless Access" on 12.6.2006 to invite comments of various stakeholders.

(b) Comments were received by TRAI from various stakeholders and Open House discussion on the consultation paper was also held by TRAI on 7th July, 2006 in New Delhi.

(c) to (e) The Hon'ble Prime Minister has approved an action point for vacating adequate spectrum from existing users and making it available for commercial use. Accordingly, a Project has been taken up for providing Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) links for some of the existing wireless links for release of additional spectrum. After completion of this Project, spectrum upto 45 MHZ would become available for allotment to telecom service providers.

### **Inter-Portability of cellphones numbers**

1669. **SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated and finalized a policy for Inter-Portability of cellphone numbers between various telecom companies;