

areas, including installation of 253 mobile towers in Odisha. The project will be funded from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has been nominated to execute the project.

Issuing mobile connections on the basis of Aadhaar Cards

1453. SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the efforts the Ministry is making to make it mandatory to provide mobile connection only on the basis of Aadhaar card as proof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that TRAI has made this recommendation;
- (c) whether in view of only 70 crore people having got Aadhaar cards, would it not hamper other 50 crore people in getting mobile connection; and
- (d) if so, how the Ministry is planning to go ahead in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) The Department of Telecommunications does not have any proposal to make it mandatory to provide mobile connection on the basis of Aadhaar Card as Proof of Identity/Proof of Address at present.

(b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has not made any recommendations with regard to use of Aadhaar Card as Proof of Identity/Proof of Address.

(c) and (d) In view of above, this does not arise at present.

Increase in internet speed and connectivity to small rural areas

1454. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps Government is taking to increase the internet speed in the country and also connectivity to small rural areas;
- (b) the mediums of delivering high speed internet in the country; and
- (c) the time-frame when the entire country will be covered by fibre optic network?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Government is implementing National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project to provide broadband connectivity through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to all the Gram Panchayats in the country (approximately 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats) at an estimated cost of ₹ 20,100 crore by bridging the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and Blocks. Under this project, at least 100 Mbps (megabits per second) bandwidth would be made available at each Gram Panchayat (GP) to be used by all the service providers on non-discriminatory basis. Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited (BBNL), a Central Public Sector Undertaking Unit (CPSU) has been created to execute the project. Work is being implemented by BBNL through 3 CPSUs viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Railtel and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL).

NOFN is expected to provide the basic infrastructure for facilitating provision of broadband services in rural areas by telecom service operators. The project to connect all the Gram Panchayats with respective blocks through OFC is envisaged to be completed in a phased manner by December, 2016.

The roll out of services using 3G and Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) spectrum which was put to auction in 2010 would also lead to expansion of broadband facilities in the country.

India Post to enter into e-commerce

1455. SHRI AVINASH PANDE:

SHRI D. KUPENDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to make India Post to enter into e-commerce business, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether this proposal will generate more employment in postal department and revenue thereby, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Department of Posts provides its existing products and services like Speed Post, Express Parcel/Business Parcel etc. to all customers including e-commerce business. There is also a web based