

(a) the time by which a Post Office and Speed Post centre will be opened for the convenience of residents of sectors 76, 86, 87, 88 and 89 in Faridabad; and

(b) whether any proposal in this regard is under consideration of the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Department has received a proposal for opening of new post office in the area known as "Greater Faridabad" for the convenience of residents of sectors 76, 86, 87, 88 and 89. The same is currently under examination. If it is found feasible and justified as per departmental norms for opening of new post offices, it will be opened within the current financial year *i.e.* 2014-15. The Speed Post facility will be provided if the above Post Office is opened. Presently, the Speed Post facility in the areas of Sector 76 is being provided through Ballabgarh Mukhya Dak Ghar (MDG) and Sectors 86, 87 and 89 are being provided through Sector 16 A Post Office.

Connecting panchayats with internet facility

1458. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has launched a project for connecting all Panchayats in the country with internet facility, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the allocation of funds made for this purpose and the quantum of funds released so far; and

(c) the status of the work taken up so far and the estimated time to be taken for completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Government approved National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project on 25.10.2011 to provide broadband connectivity through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to all the Gram Panchayats in the country (approx. 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats) at an estimated cost of about ₹ 20,100 crore by bridging the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats and Blocks. Under this project, at least 100 Mbps (mega bits per second) bandwidth would be made available at each Gram Panchayat (GP) to be used by all categories of service providers including Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on non-discriminatory basis.

Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited (BBNL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), has been created on 25.02.2012 for execution of the NOFN project.

BBNL has entered into agreement with 3 Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), RailTel and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) to utilize their existing optical fiber to implement the work on ground for laying incremental optical fiber for connecting all Gram Panchayats (GPs).

(b) Against an indicative cost of about ₹ 20,100 crore of NOFN project, ₹ 2,010 crore has been released by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to BBNL as on 31.10.2014.

(c) Survey work has been completed by the 3 CPSUs viz. BSNL, RailTel and PGCIL for more than 80% of the Gram Panchayats. Tenders for trenching and pipe laying works have been finalized by 3 CPSUs for around 1154 blocks and work has commenced in 514 blocks. About 11411 km of pipe and 6577 km of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid. Purchase orders for procurement of OFC and electronic transmission equipment Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) have been issued and supply commenced.

The scheme to connect all the Gram Panchayats with respective blocks on Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to facilitate broadband services is envisaged to be completed in a phased manner by December, 2016.

Mobile signal towers in Goa

1459. SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of mobile signal towers existing at present in Goa erected by BSNL;

(b) the number of towers proposed to be erected;

(c) the hurdles which have come in the way and attempt made by BSNL to find solutions;

(d) the nature of agreement which BSNL enters into with the owners of the land on which the BSNL proposes to erect tower; and

(e) whether the apprehension regarding health hazard has been removed?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has installed 129 mobile towers in Goa.