

- **National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)/ BharatNet:** The Government has proposed to provide broadband connectivity to 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats under NOFN/ BharatNet Project. The Optical Fibre Cable has been laid upto 1,48,814 kms covering 64,955 Gram Panchayats (GPs).
- **Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity:** It is envisaged to provide mobile connectivity to 55,669 uncovered villages. The steps taken are as follows:
 - (i) Under Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for North-Eastern Region, the tender work has been started to provide connectivity to 8621 identified uncovered villages in North Eastern Region by March 2018.
 - (ii) Under Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, in-principle approval has been accorded to provide mobile connectivity in these islands.
 - (iii) 2186 out of 2199 planned mobile towers have been setup in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States.
 - (iv) 4752 uncovered villages in Himalayan States and 2138 villages in Border States have been planned to be covered.
- **Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (National Digital Literacy Mission):** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is implementing National Digital Literacy Mission for IT Mass Literacy, which aims to train 52.5 lakh persons in selected households throughout the country over a period of 4 years. Till date, 82.74 lakh candidates have been trained and 53.37 lakh certified.

Mobile phone sets in the country

3459 SHRI BASAWARAJ PATIL: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) how many mobile sets are in use in the country;
- (b) the requirement of mobile sets per year; and
- (c) whether there is any lacuna in mobile sets leading to their misuse which is harm in common man, if so, the steps taken by Government to stop it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) As per the

Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, the number of wireless mobile phone subscribers in the country as on 30.09.2016 is 1049.7 million. However, some users have mobile handsets with multiple SIM capabilities. As per Indian Cellular Association (ICA), there are approximately 830 million mobile phones in use in the country.

(b) Mobile handsets market during 2015-16 is estimated to be around 270 million.

(c) Keeping in view the safety of Indian consumers and to curb the inflow of sub-standard electronic products, the “Electronics and Information Technology Goods (Requirements for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2012” was notified on 03.10.2012 by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under the provision of Compulsory Registration Scheme notified under the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act, 1986. The Order mandates compliance of notified goods to Indian safety standards. Mobiles Phones have been mandated under the aforesaid Order for compliance to Indian Safety standards w.e.f. 13.09.2015. Further, the Order came into effect for “Power adaptors for IT equipment” w.e.f. 01.12.2015 and for “Sealed Secondary Cells/Batteries containing Alkaline or other non-acid electrolytes for use in portable applications” w.e.f. 01.06.2016.

Promotion of food zones/clusters

3460. SHRIMATI RAJANI PATIL: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been shortage of food processing units in the country resulting in farmers not getting fair price for their produce;

(b) if so, the details and impact thereof along with requirement and availability of such facilities, State-wise;

(c) whether Government proposes to formulate any scheme for development and promotion of Food Zones/Clusters to ensure adequate supply of raw material to food processing units in the surplus fruit and vegetable growing areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI): (a) and (b) There is a scope for growth of food processing industries as the level of food processing in the country was only 6.76% in 2010-11, as per a 2014 study, commissioned by Ministry of Agriculture, and undertaken by Institute of Economic Growth. The data regarding the farmers not getting fair price for their produce is not available. As per Annual