

(SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (c) BharatNet Project is being implemented to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approximately 2,50,000) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) and by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, aerial fibre, radio and satellite media, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis. The project is planned to be implemented in phases. Under Phase I of the project, 1 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to be connected by laying underground OFC by November, 2017. Under Phase II, connectivity will be provided to balance GPs in the country and the internet access to the public through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is proposed to cover all the GPs by March, 2019.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is setting up Public Wi-Fi hotspots at 25,000 Telephone Exchanges of BSNL in rural areas. Further, Common Service Centre-Special Purpose Vehicle(CSC-SPV), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is also setting up Wi-Fi Choupals in 5,000 GPs under BharatNet in the country.

#### **Migration of satellite phone users to BSNL**

2297. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL has asked all satellite phone users in the country to migrate to its network by 31st July, 2017;

(b) whether it is also a fact that satellite phone services are expected to be phased out soon; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the BSNL is now ready to provide Global Satellite Phone Services, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has asked all satellite phone users/customers having valid operating license to migrate to BSNL network by 31st July, 2017.

(b) Only for the Mini-M and Global Area Network (GAN) services Tata Communications Limited (TCL) has asked its prepaid tariff plan customers to use the available balance by 31.08.2017.

(c) Yes, after inauguration of satellite gateway of BSNL on 24.05.2017, BSNL is ready to provide Global Satellite Phone Services.