

(c) how many rural areas have been connected so far with optical fibre and high speed broadband connectivity; and

(d) how much of funds have been utilised for this proposal so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (c) The BharatNet project is being executed by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) in a phased manner for providing broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx. 2,50,000) in the country. On 19.07.2017, the Union Cabinet approved a modified strategy for implementing Bharat Net in three Phases. Under phase-I, 100,000 GPs are under implementation. The remaining 1,50,000 GPs (approx.) are being implemented through an optimal mix of underground/aerial OFC, radio and satellite media, under Phase-II. The project is targeted to be completed by March 2019. As on 10.12.2017, Optical Fibre connectivity has been provided to 1,05,831 GPs by laying 2,48,233 km Optical Fibre Cable and 82,540 GPs are service ready.

(d) As on 08.12.2017, ₹ 11885.97 crore has been provided to BBNL and ₹ 10,490 crore has since been utilized.

Late arrival of Registered Post within the same district of Uttarakhand

†54. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a registered post from district headquarter in Uttarakhand takes 10 days to reach a destination within the same district, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether Government would take steps to ensure that registered post, within the same district, reaches its destination in three days, along with the details of such steps, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) No, Sir. The Department of Posts maintains Management Information System (MIS) data in its online application 'R-Net' for monitoring performance of Registered Post. As per the MIS for the months of October and November 2017, the average transit time taken for a registered article booked for delivery in the state of Uttarakhand was 4.4 days and 3.9 days respectively. However, it is possible that owing to the difficult terrain of the state and in exceptional circumstances such as landslides etc., occasional delays in mail transmission and delivery might have taken place.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Department is taking steps to continuously improve its operational efficiency for all kinds of mail including Registered Post. Under the Mail Network Optimisation Project of the Department the entire network for Registered Post has been optimised and infrastructure of the mail processing offices upgraded. The processes involved in the entire value chain of a registered mail have been redefined and the MIS developed for the various legs from booking to delivery of a registered mail is monitored at all level of administrations and corrective actions taken as required.

Benchmark for call drops by telecom operators

55. SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether telecom operators are adhering to the benchmark of 2 per cent for call drops, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the average rate of call drops currently and the initiatives taken by Government to ensure adherence to the benchmark;

(c) the infrastructure targets of Government to minimize call drops;

(d) the total number of cellular towers commissioned by the Ministry in Government-owned buildings and spaces, along with the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government is on its target to achieve the installation of such cellular towers, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, as per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Report for quarter ending June 2017, all telecom service providers for 2G and 3G services are complying to TRAI's Call drop benchmark of $\leq 2\%$ for Licensed Service Area (LSA) as a whole. This position has been maintained on consistent basis since the quarter ending September 2016.

(b) and (c) The average rate of call drops for Licensed Service Area (LSA) as a whole for each 2G and 3G telecom service provider as given in TRAI Report for quarter ending June 2017 is given in the Statement (*See below*) for both 2G and 3G services separately. Average value of call drop rate in different License Service Areas (LSAs) is in the range from 0.03 % to 1.98 % against call drop rate benchmark of 2% on average basis for the entire LSA across 23 LSAs.

Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government are as follows:

(i) making available sufficient spectrum for mobile services including auction of 965 MHz in 2016,