

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2,50,000) in the country.

As part of this project, the last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is being provided at all the GPs in the country. The Digital Communications Commission (DCC) has approved to award the work of provisioning of 2 Wi-Fi Access Points (APs) in about 10,000 GPs of Rajasthan for implementation through Government of Rajasthan and the remaining GPs of BharatNet Phase-I through CSC e-Governance Services India Limited. So far, Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed at 43,558 GPs and out of them, services are being provided in 14,770 GPs, catering to about 12.4 lakh users. Further, 31531 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been provided.

(c) and (d) Based on the report of a committee chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog, Digital Communications Commission (DCC) on 13.06.2019 has approved a revised strategy for creation, maintenance and utilisation of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Model and the same is being taken to the Union Cabinet for information.

#### **Mobile towers in Jammu and Kashmir**

3670. MIR MOHAMMAD FAYAZ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is planning to telephonically connect Machil, Keran, Budanamel and Jumagurd border areas in Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) whether there is any plan to install mobile towers in these areas and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) A total 148 Mobile Towers in Jammu and Kashmir State have been approved under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) Schemes for providing connectivity to the 361 villages of uncovered areas of Ladakh and Kargil (Jammu and Kashmir region), border areas and other priority areas. However, presently, there is no specific plan to install mobile towers to connect Machil, Keran, Budanamel and Jumagurd border areas in Jammu and Kashmir.