(ii) All the rural exchanges have been provided with reliable media.

(iii) Centralized operation and maintenance Centres are proposed to be opened for rural exchanges for better maintenance of telephones in villages.

(b) Sir, mobile telephone service is planned in both Ferozepur and Faridkot district. In Phase-I, 2000 lines in Ferozepur City, 1500 lines in Abohar City and 1000 lines in Faridkot City are proposed to be provided.

(c) Service in these cities is likely to start in the 4th quarter of year 2002.

Status or Post Offices in Punjab

†2625. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of Post Offices in Punjab;

(b) whether every village of the State has facility of Post Office;

(c) if not, the number of the villages in each district not having any facility of Post Office; and

(d) the details of the steps taken by Government to enhance postal services and cover all villages in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAP AN SIKDAR): (a) 21 Head Post Offices, 782 Sub-Post Offices and 3093 Branch Post Offices are functioning at present in Punjab.

(d) and (c) All villages in Punjab have facility of daily delivery and collection of mails and sale of Stamps and Stationery.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) 6 new Sub-Post Offices, 8 new Branch Post Offices and 26 new Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras have been opened in Punjab during the financial year 2001-2002. Setting up of new Post Offices and Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras is subject to the fulfilment of prescribed norms and availability of requisite resources.

E-billing services through Post Office

2626. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a scheme has been formulated to provide e-billing services through the post offices in some selected cities on experimental basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the extent to which the select post offices have been computerised and can render efficient service; and

(c) the details of the phased plans drawn up for computerization of the post offices across the country and the programmes finalized, if any, to meet the training needs of the employees who would increasingly handle various e-services in course of time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) The pilot project is running in 20 post offices in Bangalore having computers, modems and internet connection. It is under testing in 10 post offices in Kolkata.

(c) Computerisation of post offices and implementation of training programmes for employees during the Tenth Five Year Plan would depend on the Plan to be approved by the Planning Commission and funds allotted. Upto the Ninth Five Year Plan 1764 Post Offices have been computerised and training with regard to operating systems, networking and various application soft wares has been imparted to nearly 43,000 officials.