

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 162
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 2026**

NON-FUNCTIONAL WI-FI HOTSPOTS IN RURAL AREAS

***162. SHRI VISHALDADA PRAKASHBAPU PATIL:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any evaluation of the implementation of the rural Wi-Fi hotspot initiative given that a large number of installed hotspots remain non-functional;
- (b) if so, the details of the current operational status and the reasons identified for the low activation rate of these hotspots;
- (c) whether the Government has engaged with telecom service providers and local bodies to assess the challenges related to maintenance, connectivity and adoption of these Wi-Fi services;
- (d) if so, the details of the assessment and any corrective measures being planned; and
- (e) the details of the policy interventions and financial support mechanisms being introduced to ensure the success of the programme and improve digital connectivity in rural and underserved regions?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN
REGION
(SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA)**

- (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) to (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.162 FOR 11TH FEBRUARY, 2026 REGARDING “NON-FUNCTIONAL WI-FI HOTSPOTS IN RURAL AREAS.”

(a) & (b) With a view to proliferate wi-fi hotspots across the country, including in rural areas, Government has launched the Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) initiative. As on 31.1.2026, 52,733 wi-fi hotspots were installed in rural areas under the said initiative, of which 94 hotspots were non-active.

(c) & (d) Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) is currently active Wi-Fi hotspot initiative of the department, in which, the Government's role is primarily, one of policy enablement and providing a frame work. Further, as on 31.12.2025, a total of 609 Workshops/Seminars, 318 Press Briefs, and 183 Advertisements have been undertaken by the field offices of the department for proliferation of PM - WANI Scheme.

(e) Under Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) scheme, to address the issues relating to proliferation of Public Wi-Fi Access Points, a series of interventions in the existing PM-WANI Framework and Guidelines for Registrations has been issued by Department of Telecommunication on 16.09.2024. These policy interventions include:

- Allowing Public Data Offices (PDOs) to offer PM WANI through a regular FTTH connection which will reduce their cost.
- Allowing PDOs to aggregate their multiple Access point to a single backhaul towards the ISP.
- Allowing existing home or business Wi-Fi Access Points to join the larger PM-WANI network, thereby utilizing their existing Access point as a source of revenue.
- Allowing roaming between Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) enabling end users to switch between PM-WANI Wi-Fi hotspots of different PDOAs smoothly.
- Allowing Public Data Offices (PDOs) to offer Mobile data offload by teaming up with existing Telecom Servicer Providers.
- Allowing Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs) and App providers to send content, promotions, and branding messages to potential PM-WANI Wi-Fi users, after due user consent.

Further, on 16.06.2025, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released a Telecommunication Tariff (71st Amendment) Order, 2025 related to tariff for retail broadband connectivity for Public Data Offices (PDOs). This order mandates that all retail FTTH broadband plans up to 200 Mbps must be offered to Public Data Offices (PDOs) at tariffs not more than twice the corresponding consumer broadband price.

There is no provision of financial support mechanism to any State or Union Territory under PM-WANI scheme.
