

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5465
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25TH MARCH, 2026**

BROADBAND AND PUBLIC WI-FI IN RURAL AREAS

5465. SHRI VISHNU DATT SHARMA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is implementing BharatNet and PM-WANI to provide affordable broadband and public Wi-Fi in rural areas and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether BharatNet fibre connections, PM-WANI hotspots and CSCs are functional in the districts of Katni, Panna and town of Khajuraho in the Khajuraho Lok Sabha region and the number of Gram Panchayats/locations covered and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken to prioritise connectivity for farmers, PHCs, schools and MSMEs in these districts;
- (d) whether service quality or coverage is inadequate and if so, the reasons therefor and the corrective actions taken along with timelines thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government has any plan to expand digital literacy, support PDO/CSC viability and link connectivity infrastructure with livelihood opportunities for rural households in these districts and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

- (a) 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.

BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to create network to connect all the Gram Panchayats (GPs)/ Villages with broadband in the country. This infrastructure is leased to TSPs/ISPs for provision of internet connectivity in GPs/rural areas including villages/ Government institutions, schools, and private areas.

Further, Amended BharatNet Programme has been approved by Cabinet on 04.08.2023, for up-gradation of existing network of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II, creation of network in balance GPs, Operation and Maintenance for 10 years and utilization.

- (b) A total of 2,611 FTTH connections are operational in the districts of Katni, Panna and Rajnagar Block of Chhatarpur District (Khajuraho town falls under Rajnagar Block), and 502 Gram Panchayats are covered as per the details given below:

SN	Location	GPs covered	FTTH Connections
1	Katni district	115	1043
2	Panna district	387	1434
3	Rajnagar Block of Chhatarpur district	0 (in ABP)	134
Total		502	2611

District-wise count of PM-WANI hotspots for Katni district, Panna district & Khajuraho town as per the C-DoT central registry, as on 10.03.2026 is given below:

SN	Location	No. of Wi-Fi Hotspots
1	Katni district	76 (Urban -55, Rural -21)
2	Panna district	40 (Urban -9, Rural -31)
3	Khajuraho	Khajuraho is in CHHATARPUR district, and there are a total of 89 PM-WANI Wi-Fi Hotspots in Chhatarpur district (Urban -16, Rural -73)

(c), (d) & (e) The internet connections in rural areas including for farmers, PHCs, schools and MSMEs is managed through BharatNet Udyamis (BNU) who could be a village level entrepreneur, Internet Service Provider, Self Help Group etc. BNUs is to be given a one-time financial incentive for activating new home fiber connections. To incentivize continuity of services, BNUs also receive a share of the monthly revenue (on established market practice).

Following corrective action have been taken to improve the network infrastructure, quality and speed of fibre-optic internet services:

- (i) Upgradation of BharatNet network earlier implemented in linear architecture / GPON technology to ring architecture / IP-MPLS technology.
- (ii) Setting up of Central Network Operating Centre (C-NOC).
- (iii) Setting up of Project Monitoring Unit.
- (iv) Videography/ photography of trenching, fibre laying, splicing etc.
- (v) GIS mapping of network.
- (vi) Quality testing of material being deployed.
- (vii) Appointment of independent engineers for inspection, validation, bill processing, etc.

Further, TRAI monitors the performance of service providers against the benchmark of various Quality of Service parameters. As per performance submitted by service providers, all the service providers are meeting benchmark of all networks related QoS parameters of access service (wireless) in all service areas in the month of January 2026.

Under the PM-WANI framework, the Government's role is limited to policy enablement. Service provision under PM-WANI is entirely market-driven and Public Wi-Fi hotspots are deployed by entities based solely on techno-commercial viability in specific areas.
