

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1201
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16th DECEMBER, 2022**

REFORMS IN TELECOM SECTOR

1201 # SHRI VIJAY PAL SINGH TOMAR:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering more reforms in telecom sector;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Government is inviting recommendations from the industry on various issues, including improving quality of services, bridging digital gap and ensuring security of telecom networks;
- (c) whether telecommunication facilities are not available in some villages of the country, particularly in remote areas of the country; and
- (d) if so, the steps proposed to improve the quality of telecom services along with action being taken by Government to provide telecommunication facilities to all villages of the country?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) & (b) Government is committed to reforms in telecom sector. The Government has approved various structural and procedural reforms in the telecom sector. These reforms include Rationalization of Adjusted Gross Revenue; Rationalization of Bank Guarantees(BGs); Rationalization of interest rates and removal of penalties; Dispensing with the requirement of BGs (for auctions held after 15.09.2021) to secure instalment payments; Permission for surrender of spectrum after 10 years (in future auctions); Dispensing with the requirement of Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for spectrum acquired in spectrum auctions held after 15.09.2021; Removal of additional SUC of 0.5% for spectrum sharing; Permission for 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in telecom sector under automatic route subject to safeguards; Fixed time for spectrum auctions (normally in the last quarter of every financial year); Requirement of licenses under 1953 Customs Notification for wireless equipment replaced with self-declaration; Permission for Self-KYC; e-KYC rate revised to only one Rupee; Dispensing with the requirement of fresh KYC for shifting from Prepaid to Post-paid and vice-versa; Replacement of paper Customer Acquisition Forms with digital storage of data; Easing SACFA clearance for telecom towers; and Addressing liquidity requirements of the Telecom Service Providers by way of moratorium/deferment. Government has also published draft Telecom Bill on 21st September, 2022. Regular consultations are carried out with industry, operators and their associations on various issues, including improving quality of services, bridging digital gap and ensuring security of the telecommunication networks.

(c) & (d) Telecommunication facilities are not available in some of the villages in the country. The Union Cabinet on 27.07.2022 approved a project for saturation of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages of the country. To provide quality telecom services across the country, Government is implementing various schemes/projects under Universal Service Obligation Fund namely (i) Left Wing Extremism (Phase-I &II) projects; (ii) Aspirational Districts scheme; (iii) Commissioning of Submarine Optical Fibre Cable connectivity from Chennai to Andaman & Nicobar Islands; (iv) Scheme for connecting submarine Optical Fibre Cable from Kochi to Lakshadweep Islands; (v) BharatNet (Phase-I &II) projects; (vi) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region; and (vii) Provision of 4G mobile coverage in uncovered villages and seamless 4G mobile coverage of National Highway (NH - 223) in Andaman & Nicobar Islands etc. Government has also taken several policy initiatives to facilitate infrastructure growth for delivery of quality services. These include permitting trading/sharing/liberalisation of spectrum, sharing of passive & active infrastructure.
