

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2069
TO BE ANSWERED ON 7th MARCH, 2018**

WI-FI HOTSPOTS FOR BROADBAND ACCESS

2069. SHRIMATI ANJU BALA:
SHRI TEJ PRATAP SINGH YADAV:
SHRI B. SRIRAMULU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has to setup five lakh wi-fi hotspots which will provide fast broadband access to five crore rural citizens and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has planned to establish an indigenous 5G Test Bed to harness the benefit of emerging new technology and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government for creation and augmentation of telecom infrastructure in the country?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

- (a) BharatNet Project is to provide broadband connectivity to all 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) (approx.) in the country. Under this project, the Last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi (2 Access Points per GP) or any other suitable broadband technology, is to be provided at all the GPs (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country.
- (b) The Government is planning to set up 'Indigenous 5G Test Bed' in India in collaboration with Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc). The project envisages setting up of end-to-end Open 5G Test Bed for Indian companies & academia in distributed architecture model.
- (c) The Government has taken the following steps for creation and augmentation of telecom infrastructure in the country:
 - A.** Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is being utilised for creation and augmentation of Telecom network, the steps taken include the following:

I. BharatNet Project

BharatNet Project is being implemented in a phased manner to connect all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2,50,000) by broadband in the country. The Phase-I has been completed, and as on 25.02.2018, a total of 1,12,677 Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been connected by laying 2,65,296 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC). The number of Service Ready GPs is 1,03,279. The remaining GPs are planned in phase-II through State Governments, public and private sectors by using an optimal mix of media by March, 2019.

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II. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region (NER):

CTDP for NER, which comprises setting up of mobile towers to provide mobile connectivity to villages is being implemented with USOF Funding. USOF has signed an agreement with BSNL to install 2817 mobile towers for providing mobile coverage in 4119 uncovered villages with an estimated cost of Rs. 2258 crore.

Agreements have also been signed with M/s Bharti Airtel Limited and M/s Bharti Hexacom Limited to install 2004 mobile towers for providing mobile coverage in 2128 villages and along National Highways in rest of NER with an estimated cost of Rs. 1656 crore.

III. Provision of mobile services in Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)affected areas

Out of 2355 towers to be set up, 2329 mobile towers have been set up in LWE affected areas with USOF Funding to provide mobile coverage in uncovered LWE affected areas.

IV. Augmentation of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) Network between District Headquarter (DHQ) and Block Headquarters (BHQs) in North Eastern Region

OFC network augmentation between the Block HQ and Districts HQ envisages creation of OFC Infrastructure in North-East Region. The schemes are being implemented to provide sufficient back-haul capacity to integrate the voice and data traffic from the access network in the rural areas to their core network.

V. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for Andaman & Nicobar Islands:

a) Satellite Bandwidth Augmentation for Andaman & Nicobar Islands:

Satellite bandwidth for Andaman & Nicobar Islands has been augmented from 260 Mbps to 1320 Mbps by BSNL.

b) Submarine OFC Connectivity between Mainland India (Chennai) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands:

A Project on Submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) connectivity from mainland India (Chennai) to Andaman & Nicobar Islands is being implemented.

B. Other telecom initiatives:

a) The licenses granted to the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) by the Department of Telecommunications, prescribe minimum roll out obligations to be fulfilled within specified timeframe. However, the TSPs are not mandated to cover all the urban/ rural areas. After meeting the minimum roll out obligations, the TSPs are free to deploy their network for providing additional coverage as per their business decision. The TSPs provide mobile telephone services using appropriate technologies (viz. 2G, 3G and/or 4G) to comply with their minimum roll out obligations and thereafter cover the geographical areas as per their business decision.

Government has allocated 965 Megahertz spectrum through auction in October 2016 to various telecom service providers for access services. Telecom Service Providers are continuously rolling out their networks using this spectrum resulting into the increase in internet connectivity and speed in the country.
