

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3615
TO BE ANSWERED ON 8TH AUGUST, 2018**

EXPANSION OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

†3615. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated/proposed to formulate any special scheme for expansion of telecommunication services in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the target fixed by the Government to complete the network rollout at gram panchayat level in the country along with the time by which the said target is likely to be achieved;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to convert all gram panchayats into e-panchayats; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) The following schemes are being implemented/ planned with support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for expansion of telecommunication services in the country:

I. BharatNet:

BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2,50,000) in the country. As part of this project, the last mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, is being provided at all the GPs in the country. At each GP, 5 Access Points (APs) are being set up, out of which 3 APs are at Government institutions and 2 APs at public places.

In December 2017, the phase-I of the BharatNet project was completed by connecting one lakh GPs. A modified strategy to implement BharatNet has been approved by Cabinet on 19.07.2017, which provides an optimal mix of media to connect GPs, implementation by State-led Model, Private Sector, CPSU Model,

laying of fresh fibre from Block to GPs and setting up of last mile architecture at all GPs. As on 30.07.2018, the number of Service Ready GPs are 1,13,549. The project is targeted to be completed by March 2019.

II. Provision of mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas:

i) LWE Phase-I:

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has executed the LWE Phase-I project with financial support from USOF for providing mobile connectivity at 2355 tower locations, identified by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in the Left Wing Extremism affected areas with a sanctioned cost of Rs. 4081 crore. As on date 2335 tower locations are radiating.

ii) LWE Phase-II:

The Cabinet has approved a project proposal of LWE Phase-II for providing mobile connectivity in inhabited and uncovered villages at 4072 tower locations, identified by MHA, in the Left Wing Extremism affected areas in 10 States with an estimated cost of Rs. 7,330 crores (plus applicable taxes) using 2G + 4G technology. The project is targeted to be rolled out within 18 months from the date of signing the agreement with the implementing agency to be selected through a competitive bidding process.

III. Mobile coverage of uncovered villages:

The Government has planned to provide mobile coverage in inhabited and uncovered villages of the country in a phased manner subject to availability of funds/resources. DoT is in the process of identification of uncovered villages of the country.

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

i) 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, which will provide necessary bandwidth for providing broadband connectivity. BSNL has been nominated as project execution agency. On the basis of transparent tendering process, BSNL has awarded the work to its vendor on 26.06.2018. The timelines are 24 Months from date of issue of the work order.

ii) Provision of 2G+4G Mobile Coverage in Uncovered Villages and seamless 2G+4G Mobile coverage of NH 223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands:

For provisioning of 2G+4G mobile coverage in 144 uncovered villages and seamless 2G+4G mobile coverage of NH 223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, tender has been floated on 04.06.2018. The tentative timelines are to be 12 Months from date of issue of the work order.

V. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for Lakshadweep Islands:

i) Satellite bandwidth for Lakshadweep Islands is to be augmented from 102 Mbps to 318 Mbps by BSNL. The project is targeted to be completed by September 2018.

ii) The project for Augmentation of 2G Mobile Coverage with EDGE Technology in Lakshadweep Islands is under implementation.

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

A Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North-Eastern Region (NER) to install 6673 mobile towers for 8621 identified uncovered villages, 321 mobile towers for National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the NER is being implemented.

(c) & (d) Ministry of Panchayati Raj is implementing an e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) under Digital India Programme that seeks to transform the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), making them more transparent, accountable and effective as units of decentralized local self-governments. Under e-Panchayat MMP, a suite of core common software applications has been developed to address various aspects of the Panchayats' functioning, including planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licences, etc. For bringing transparency and accountability, all records available in these applications are published online and information is available up to the Gram Panchayat level.
