

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 811  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2019**

**ACHIEVEMENTS IN COMMUNICATION SECTOR**

**†811. SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the achievements made by the Government in communication sector during the last two years;
- (b) whether any presentation on the achievements was made by the Ministry before the Prime Minister during the last two years and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Ministry has reduced its target and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any road map has been prepared by the Government for the communication revolution in the next three years and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of the problems and the remedies, suggestions stated in front of Prime Minister; and
- (f) the key focus areas of the Ministry for the next three years?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, LAW & JUSTICE AND  
ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

- (a) The details of achievements made by the Government in the communication sector during the last two years are placed at **Annexure-I**
- (b) No, Sir.
- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) The road map for holistic development of the telecom sector, as envisaged in the National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP)-2018 is given at **Annexure-II**.
- (e) Does not arise in view of (b) above.
- (f) Key focus areas of the Department for the next three years are as under:
  - i. Auction of spectrum, especially for developing the 5G ecosystem in the country.

- ii. Laying of OFC under phase II of BharatNet programme.
- iii. Working for the objectives of National Digital Communications Policy -2018
- iv. Providing connectivity to remote, rural and uncovered areas through implementation of:
  - Phase-II of the project for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States
  - To connect mainland India with the Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) and Lakshadweep Islands by laying of submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC)
  - A Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North East Region (NER)

**ACHIEVEMENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF TELECOM DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS**

Some of the major achievements are:

**1. National Digital Communications Policy-2018**

The National Digital Communications Policy-2018 (NDCP-2018) was approved which envisions supporting India's transition to a digitally empowered economy and society by fulfilling the information and Communications needs of citizens and enterprises by establishment of a ubiquitous, resilient and affordable Digital Communications Infrastructure and Services.

**2. Economic Impact**

- i. As of March 2019, mobile connections in India have touched 1161.71 million
- ii. Internet connections which were 422.19 million at the end of March 2017 have grown to 636.73 million by the end of March, 2019 thus registering a growth of 50.82%
- iii. The number of subscribers accessing internet via wireless phones increased by 53.52% from 400.62 million in 2016-17 to 615.05 million at the end of March 2019
- iv. The number of Broadband subscribers increased by more than two times, from 276.52 million in 2017 to 563.31 million in 2019
- v. Internet traffic also witnessed phenomenal growth, touching highest ever data usage of 46.23 million terabytes in 2018.
- vi. Data consumption increased from 0.87 GB in 2016 to 8.74 GB in 2018 per month per subscriber
- vii. The cost of data has reduced from Rs 160 per GB in 2016 to Rs 10.52 per GB in 2018.

**3. Key Reforms in the Telecom Sector**

- i. Spectrum trading and sharing allowed to boost competition
- ii. Spectrum harmonization undertaken resulting in freeing up of 197 MHz spectrum
- iii. Sharing of Passive (e.g. fibre, towers) and Active (e.g. BTSs) infrastructure allowed
- iv. Easing of Right of Way (RoW) Rules and charges through notification
- v. Full Mobile Number Portability enabled
- vi. Virtual Network Operators (VNOs) license introduced for effective infrastructure utilization and to boost services in under-served areas
- vii. Flight and Maritime Connectivity Rules, 2018 have been published in Gazette of India on 14.12.2018, to provide voice or data or both type of services, on the hitherto unconnected ships within Indian Territorial waters and on aircraft in Indian airspace
- viii. Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order 2017, notified for telecom products, services and works for telecom sector on 29.08.2018 to ensure reasonable market access for domestic companies thus enabling them to scale up their production and get more competitive.

**4. Telecom Infrastructure**

- i. No. of mobile BTS more than doubled from 7.9 Lakh in May 2014 to ~ over 21 lakh in June 2019
- ii. More than 3 Lakh km High Speed Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) laid

- iii. 1.20 lakh Gram Panchayats connected through High Speed Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) network
- iv. Significant boost to Make-in-India; Telecom equipment deployed in BharatNet has been fully designed, developed and manufactured in India.
- v. Triggered ITI turnaround; turned Profitable for first time in 16 years

**5. Other Projects being undertaken**

- (a) Network for Spectrum: Almost 94% of targeted OFC has been laid.
- (b) For Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas setting up of 4,072 Towers approved for installation in Phase II
- (c) For North East Region a comprehensive Telecom Development Plan approved with 7,000 telecom towers to be installed for connectivity to over 8,600 villages and 3,200 KM of OFC network to be laid
- (d) Submarine Cable Connectivity work has started connecting mainland to Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- (e) Provisioning of Wi-Fi Services by setting up 25,000 hot spots in BSNL rural exchanges and 7,000 hot spots (e-Choupals) by Common Service Centres

**ROADMAP FOR COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR**

The National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) -2018 has laid down a roadmap for ensuring India's transition to a digitally empowered economy and society by fulfilling the information and communications needs of citizens and enterprises through establishment of a ubiquitous, resilient and affordable Digital Communications Infrastructure and Services. The key objectives of the policy, to be achieved by 2022 are:

- a) provisioning of Broadband for all;
- b) creating 4 Million additional jobs in the Digital Communications sector;
- c) enhancing the contribution of the Digital Communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from ~ 6% in 2017;
- d) propelling India to the Top 50 Nations in the ICT Development Index of ITU from 134 in 2017;
- e) enhancing India's contribution to Global Value Chains; and
- f) ensuring Digital Sovereignty.

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