

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1662
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2023**

AVAILABILITY OF HIGH SPEED INTERNET

†1662. **SHRI CHUNNI LAL SAHU:
SHRI JAMYANG TSERING NAMGYAL:
SHRI MOHAN MANDAVI:
SHRI JAYANT SINHA:
SHRI JASWANT SINGH BHABHOR:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any measures have been taken by the Government to ensure the availability of high quality and high speed internet in the North Eastern States of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by the Government to increase the connectivity across the islands of the country; and
- (c) the details of the efforts made by the Government to improve the mobile connectivity for the Armed Forces serving in the inaccessible and remote border areas like Siachin?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Government has under taken various schemes to improve telecom connectivity in the region:
 - (i) Telecom connectivity in North Eastern Region (NER) has improved significantly in last 10 years. The number of Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) in NER has increased from 20,106 in March 2014 to 1,08,182 in March 2023. Accordingly, the number of mobile phone users has increased from 24.7 million in March 2014 to 37.3 million in March 2023. The Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) laid in NER has increased from 35,315 km in March 2014 to 1,35,306 km in September 2023. This has boosted roll out of 4G/5G mobile services in the region.
 - (ii) BharatNet programme has reached to 2,07,346 GPs across India in last ten years. Bharat Net scope has been recently expanded to cover all the inhabited villages at an outlay of ₹ 1.88 lakhs crores, including NER. Details of Service Ready GPs in NER under BharatNet is available on DoT website.
 - (iii) Total 2,181 number of towers have been commissioned as on 31.10.2023 in the NER region under various schemes undertaken by the Government.
 - (iv) Two Internet International Bandwidth links each of 10 Gbps (Giga Bits Per Second) have been hired in Nov-2021 and Apr-2022 from Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL), Bangladesh via Cox Bazar/Kuakata to Agartala for making available high quality and high-speed internet access to the States of North Eastern Region.
 - (v) 50% discount has been provided in spectrum auction for NER.

(b) The following projects have been under-taken across the islands of the country for enhancement in telecom connectivity in the last nine years:

- (i) 2,313 Kilometers Submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid from Chennai to Port Blair and further to seven other islands of Andaman & Nicobar and the project is commissioned in Aug-2020. The enhanced connectivity enabled to launch 4G/5G mobile services, besides other telecom & related services by various Telecom Service Providers in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- (ii) 1,869 Kilometers Submarine OFC has been laid in July-2023 between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands covering all inhabited 11 Islands for providing high speed telecommunication services in the Island.

(c) The number of Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) in the Country has increased from 6,49,834 in March 2014 to 28,54,563 in November 2023.
