

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1695
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2023**

USOF

**1695. SHRI SANJAY KAKA PATIL:
SHRI THIRUMAAVALAVAN THOL:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of progress made under the Universal Service Obligation Fund Scheme which aims at providing affordable access to a reliable and ubiquitous telecommunications network to all rural Indians, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether the Government is taking any other measures to provide reliable telecommunications network to rural India;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) Government has undertaken various schemes for providing high bandwidth capacity, mobile services and broadband connectivity and other telecommunication services in rural and remote areas of the country. The details of the projects are as below:

- (i) Under BharatNet, 2,07,346 GPs have been connected in the country. BharatNet scope has been recently expanded to cover all the inhabited villages at an outlay of ₹ 1.88 lakhs crores. State/UT-wise, details of Service Ready GPs under BharatNet is available on DoT website.
- (ii) Government has planned to provide the telecom coverage to all uncovered 54,808 villages at an outlay of more than ₹ 41,331 crores for installing 41,160 towers in the country under various USOF schemes. 6,394 Mobile towers have already been commissioned covering 7,535 villages/locations and rest are in progress. Details of the same are available on DoT Website.
- (iii) To improve connectivity in islands, submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) of 2,313 Km from Chennai to Port Blair and further to seven other islands of A&N namely Swaraj Deep (Havelock), Long Island, Rangat, Little Andaman (Hutbay), Kamorta, Car Nicobar & Great Nicobar (Campbell Bay) has been commissioned in August, 2020. A Submarine OFC project for extending connectivity between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep islands covering all inhabited 11 islands; Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Agatti, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kadmath is in progress.

- (iv) For making available high quality and high-speed internet access to the States of North Eastern Region, two Internet International Bandwidth links each of 10 Gbps (Giga Bits Per Second) have been hired in November, 2021 and April, 2022 from Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited (BSCCL), Bangladesh via Cox Bazar/Kuakata to Agartala.
