

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2907  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2023**

**INTERNET FACILITIES**

†2907. **SHRI MALOOK NAGAR:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the large number of people are unable to use free internet facility in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereon;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to provide free internet facility to these people who are not in a position to bear its cost and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of the scheme for promoting internet services in the rural areas; and
- (e) the time by when the said scheme will be implemented in various parts of the country?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) to (e) Telecom connectivity in India has improved significantly in last 10 years.
- The number of internet users have increased from 25.15 crore in March, 2014 to 91.82 crore in September, 2023.
  - Number of Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) have increased from 6.49 lakhs in March, 2014 to 25.42 lakhs in March, 2023.
  - India has seen the fastest rollout of 5G services in the world with more than 4 Lakh Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) deployed across 738 districts in 14 months.
  - Median speed for mobile broadband has also improved from 1.30 Mbps in March, 2014 to 75.80 Mbps in October, 2023.
  - **At the same time, cost of data has reduced from Rs 269 per GB in March, 2014 to Rs 9.94 per GB in March, 2023**

Further, Government of India is already implementing following schemes for promoting internet services in rural areas:-

- BharatNet project is being implemented to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. As on 13.11.2023, a total of 2,07,346 Gram Panchayats have been made service ready under BharatNet project in the country. Further, scope of BharatNet has been expanded beyond Gram Panchayats (GPs) to all inhabited villages.

- As of September '2023, out of 6,44,131 villages in the country (village data as per Registrar General of India), around 6,16,300 villages are covered with mobile connectivity at a coverage of 95.7%.
- In order to provide telecom connectivity in uncovered villages in the country, the Government has undertaken numerous schemes. Government has planned 41,160 towers in uncovered areas of the country to provide connectivity to more than 54,000 villages at the cost of more than Rs.41,331 crores.
- As on 31.10.2023, a total of 6,394 Mobile towers have already been commissioned in the country in various schemes under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), covering 7,535 villages.

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