

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2535  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2024**

**MODERNISATION OF BHARAT NET PROJECT**

**2535 DR. SHASHI THAROOR:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has contemplated in order to surmount the challenge of rural areas largely bereft of internet connections, teaming up with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and leveraging the internet connectivity attained by their Bharat Net Project;
- (b) whether it is true that, despite the Government's approval of INR 1.39 lakh crore for the modernization of the Bharat Net project, only about 194,000 out of the targeted 640,000 villages have been connected;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether it is true that even the pervasive presence of and competitive prices offered by private players has impeded the progress of Bharat Net Project; and
- (e) if so, whether the Government has devised measures to tackle this and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) to (e) As of March 2024, out of a total Internet Subscribers of 954.40 million in India there are 398.35 million Rural Internet Subscribers.

Department of Telecommunications, through BharatNet project aims to provide Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country, so as to provide broadband services to the rural institutions, households etc. Out of total 2.22 lakh Gram Panchayats envisaged under BharatNet Phase I &II, approx. 2.13 lakh Gram Panchayats (as on 22.07.2024) have been connected.

Cabinet has approved Amended BharatNet Program with financial outlay of ₹1.39 lakh crores (incl. Tax) on 04.08.2023. The program aims to connect all Gram Panchayats (GPs) by upgrading existing GPs on linear OF connectivity to ring topology. The program also includes provision of Optical Fibre connectivity to remaining villages on demand basis and to provide 1.5 crore Rural Home Fibre connections.

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