

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 865
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2026**

URBAN–RURAL DIGITAL DIVIDE

865. DR. PRABHA MALLIKARJUN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the measures being taken to bridge the urban–rural digital divide and ensure faster adoption of communication initiatives in rural and semi-urban areas;
- (b) whether the Government has identified specific low-connectivity districts or blocks where telecom penetration remains below the national average and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the steps being taken to ensure digital literacy and community-level awareness to promote effective use of existing infrastructure;
- (d) whether public–private partnerships are being encouraged for last-mile connectivity and service delivery in rural regions and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether any timeline has been fixed for achieving full broadband and mobile coverage in all gram panchayats under Bharat Net Phase-III and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Government is implementing various schemes under Digital Bharat Nidhi for expansion of internet facilities through installation of 4G mobile towers in the rural and remote areas of the country under 4G saturation project. In addition, BharatNet project aims to provide high-speed broadband connectivity such as Wi-Fi Hotspots, Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections etc. to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages on demand basis.
- (b) Government has identified 10 districts under Mission Utkarsh where telecom penetration remains below the national average.
- (c) National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) an autonomous scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), is providing training on digital literacy courses including the Digital Literacy Programmes across the country.
- (d) The last mile network is provided through BharatNet Udyamis (BNU) which inter-alia include a village level entrepreneur, Internet Service Provider, Self Help Group etc with a one-time financial incentive for activating new home fiber connections as well as share of the monthly revenue.
- (e) Amended BharatNet Program (ABP) has been approved under Design, Built, Operate & Maintain (DBOM) model for up-gradation of existing network of BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II, creation of network in balance GPs, Operation & Maintenance for 10 years and utilization.
