

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1860
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 30.07.2026

EXPANSION OF BHARATNET

1860. SMT. APARAJITA SARANGI:

Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has undertaken an outcome-based assessment of the impact of the expansion of BharatNet to over 2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats and 5G connectivity across 99.9 per cent of districts on digital skilling, employability and entrepreneurship and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has assessed the extent to which this enhanced digital infrastructure has facilitated equitable access to AI-enabled learning, online skill certification and entrepreneurship opportunities in rural, tribal and aspirational districts and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the key outcome indicators adopted and the further measures proposed to maximise the utilisation of this digital infrastructure for creating a future-ready workforce under the Skill India Mission?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
(SUSHRI SHOBHA KARANDLAJE)

(a): The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has informed that BharatNet programme has been approved for provision for broadband connectivity in a phased manner to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. Further, the Government has approved the Amended BharatNet Programme (ABP) under a design, built, operate and maintain model for upgradation of the existing network created under Phase-I and Phase-II of BharatNet and to create incremental network for new GPs, and to the non-GP villages on demand basis, operation and maintenance and provision of 1.5 crore fibre internet connections. 80,472 GPs are operational during June-2026 and as on 30.06.2026, 9,75,402 active FTTH connections are there in the country under BharatNet. Under the Amended BharatNet Program (ABP), Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) connections are being provided across the States/Union Territories through the BharatNet Udyami (BNU) model, with subsidy support from the Government of India.

(b): Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) is the unified digital public infrastructure platform that facilitates course discovery, enrolment, and certification. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has introduced job roles in emerging sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Drone Technology, Mechatronics, and Internet of Things under schemes like PMKVY and CTS. The Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) programme offers structured foundational and applied AI skill development for both students and educators.

(c): The Government undertakes periodic reviews of skilling initiatives under the Skill India Mission, assessing enrolment, certification, placement, self-employment outcomes and employer feedback to gauge their effectiveness in strengthening employability and future skills. To ensure active engagement of the industry and aligning the skill training programmes with emerging sectors, MSDE has, inter alia, introduced new age/future skills job-roles under PMKVY in areas like AI/ML, Robotics, Mechatronics and Drone Technology; introduced new age/future skills courses under CTS in emerging areas such as AI Programming, Cyber Security, Drone Technology and Internet of Things, strengthened Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH).
