

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 639
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20TH JULY, 2022**

SETTING UP OF MOBILE TOWERS

639. SHRI SAUMITRA KHAN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to expedite the setting up of mobile towers in tribal and hilly areas of the country including West Bengal to address the problem of poor connectivity;
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to improve the reach and quality of broadband services of BSNL in rural areas in view of huge increase in internet consumption on account of online education during the pandemic years;
- (c) whether the Government is planning to provide BSNL broadband connections in rural areas and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to provide such connections in rural areas of South part region of West Bengal; and
- (d) the time by which all the rural areas will be connected with broadband services of BSNL?

ANSWER

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

(a) Sir, the Government through Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) provides Mobile coverage in rural, tribal and hilly areas of the country including the State of West Bengal in a phased manner. Government has approved various schemes/projects through USOF for providing mobile and broadband coverage in rural, tribal and hilly areas across the country. The details of the schemes are attached as **Annexure**.

(b) to (d) The Government has approved the revival plan for BSNL on 23.10.2019, which, inter-alia, includes administrative allotment of spectrum for providing 4G services. With the launch of 4G services on PAN-India basis, reach and quality of BSNL wireless broadband services will expand in the country including in rural areas of West Bengal.

In addition to above, BSNL provides Fibre to the Home (FTTH) services in the country including rural areas and has taken various steps including extension of Public Data Office (PDO) services to rural areas. The operation and maintenance of Bharatnet has been given to BSNL, to further enhance the provisioning of FTTH connections in the rural areas of the country including West Bengal. With these efforts, during the period 2015-16 to 2022-23 (up to 30.06.2022), BSNL added 22,10,644 FTTH connections with an average year on year growth rate of 71.65%.

DETAILS OF SCHEMES/PROJECTS TO PROVIDE/FACILITATE THE MOBILE AND BROADBAND SERVICES IN RURAL, TRIBAL AND HILLY AREAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY:

- i. Under Phase-I of Left Wing Extremism affected areas (LWE Phase-I) scheme, 2,343 mobile towers have been installed in LWE areas which including 96 mobile towers of the State of West Bengal and are providing services. Under LWE Phase-II scheme, 2,542 mobile towers at Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) identified locations are approved across the LWE States which includes 33 locations of the State of West Bengal;
- ii. Scheme for providing mobile connectivity in 354 villages of uncovered border areas including Ladakh and Kargil Region, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and other priority areas including one(1) village of the State of West Bengal;
- iii. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region to provide mobile coverage in uncovered villages and along with the National Highways;
- iv. Scheme for providing 4G mobile connectivity in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts in four States, namely, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan;
- v. Scheme for provisioning of 4G based Mobile service in 7287 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts of 5 States Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha;
- vi. Laying of submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands for providing connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands;
- vii. Mobile connectivity to cover uncovered villages and along National Highway (NH 223) in Andaman & Nicobar Islands;
- viii. Mobile connectivity has been enhanced in Lakshadweep Islands by installing 10 mobile towers;
- ix. Satellite bandwidth augmentation upto 4 Gbps for Andaman & Nicobar Islands;
- x. Satellite bandwidth augmentation upto 1.71 Gbps for Lakshadweep Islands.
