

TELECOM EXPANSION IN RURAL AND SEMI-URBAN AREAS

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To increase telecommunication connectivity in remote and rural areas, the Government has funded several projects through Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), which inter-alia, includes following:-

- i. Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region, Andaman & Nicobar islands and Lakshadweep islands.
- ii. Scheme for providing mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas and Aspirational Districts.
- iii. 4G Saturation Project for providing 4G mobile services in uncovered villages.
- iv. Amended BharatNet project to provide broadband connectivity to the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages.

Additionally, the Government has taken several policy initiatives for proliferation of 5G services across the country and to make available affordable services to users. These initiatives, inter alia, include the following:

- i. Auction of spectrum for 5G mobile services.
- ii. Financial reforms to rationalize Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR), Bank Guarantees (BGs) and interest rates.
- iii. Removal of Spectrum Usage Charges for spectrum acquired in auction of 2022 and thereafter.
- iv. Simplification of procedure for SACFA (Standing Advisory Committee on Radio Frequency Allocations) clearance.
- v. Launch of GatiShakti Sanchar portal and RoW(Right of Way) Rules to streamline RoW permissions for installation of telecom infrastructure.
- vi. Time-bound permission for use of street furniture for installation of small cells and telecommunication line.

The telecom connectivity and 5G services have proliferated across the country. With the availability of high speed mobile network, there has been increased adoption of online banking services, e-commerce, online education as well as online government services among the users across all sections of society including those in rural and semi-urban areas.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

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