



Union Minister Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia says BharatNet is transforming India into a digitally empowered society

Over 2.14 lakh gram panchayats connected under BharatNet; digital penetration expands nationwide

India crosses one billion internet subscribers as broadband infrastructure scales up

NBM 2.0 lays clear roadmap for universal broadband access by 2030, says Union Minister Shri Scindia

ROW reforms accelerate broadband rollout; Union Minister calls for continued state cooperation

Centre–State collaboration crucial to achieving 2030 digital connectivity targets, says Union Minister Shri Scindia

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Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, today informed the Parliament that BharatNet, one of the world's largest government-led connectivity programmes, is playing a transformative role in bridging the digital divide and expanding broadband access across rural India.

Replying to a question in the **Rajya Sabha**, the Minister said that BharatNet is an ambitious initiative of the Government of India aimed at providing internet connectivity to every citizen across the country.

“Over the last eleven years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has witnessed an unprecedented expansion in mobile and broadband connectivity, driving a historic digital transformation,” Shri Scindia stated.



The Minister highlighted that mobile subscribers have increased from 930 million in 2014 to 1.2 billion today, with mobile penetration rising from 75 per cent to 92 per cent. Internet subscribers have grown from 250 million in 2014 to over 1 billion, with penetration rising from 20 per cent to nearly 71.8 per cent.

Broadband subscribers have also increased from 61 million to over 1 billion, while the average fixed broadband speed now stands at around 61.55 Mbps, he said.

BharatNet: Connecting India's Gram Panchayats

BharatNet provides connectivity by laying Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) across gram panchayats. Out of 2,56,000 gram panchayats in the country, nearly 2,14,000 have been made online under BharatNet Phases I and II, implemented at an approximate cost of ₹42,000 crore.

In Tamil Nadu, the State opted to implement the project through its special purpose vehicle, Tanfinet, instead of BSNL. Out of 12,525 gram panchayats in the State, 10869 have been connected. The remaining gram panchayats and 4,767 non-gram panchayat villages will be covered under the amended BharatNet programme, a \$16.9 billion initiative and the largest government-led connectivity programme globally.

National Broadband Mission 2.0: Targets for 2030

The Minister further informed the House that the National Broadband Mission (NBM) 2.0, launched on 1 April 2025, has set seven key targets for 2030:

1. OFC connectivity with 95 per cent uptime has been achieved in 42,000 villages as of December 2025, with a target of 2.7 lakh villages by 2030.
2. Broadband connectivity to anchor institutions such as schools, anganwadis and panchayat offices has reached 68.8 per cent, with a target of 90 per cent by 2030.
3. The national average fixed broadband download speed stands at 61.55 Mbps, with a target of 100 Mbps by 2030.
4. The average Right of Way (ROW) application disposal time has been reduced from 455 days to 30.4 days, achieving the 2030 target ahead of schedule.
5. Fibre mapping across government PSUs has reached 94 per cent under PM GatiShakti, NMP Platform with a target of 100 per cent by March.
6. Rural internet subscribers per 100 population stand at 47.16, with a target of 60 by 2030.
7. Use of sustainable energy in mobile towers is currently 12.38 per cent, with a target of 30 per cent by 2030.

Call for State Cooperation on ROW

Out of 36 States and Union Territories, 33 have implemented the Telecommunications ROW Rules, 2024. Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are among the States where compliance is pending.

The national average for ROW application processing is 30.4 days. In Tamil Nadu, the average disposal time is 85 days, nearly three times the national average,

“Cooperation from States in implementing Right of Way regulations and portals will significantly accelerate broadband expansion and ensure timely benefits to citizens,” Shri Scindia emphasised.

The Minister reiterated that continued Centre–State collaboration will be critical in achieving the 2030 broadband targets and ensuring inclusive digital growth across rural and remote regions of the country.

Regarding “National Broadband Mission in Tamil Nadu”, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia gave a detailed reply in a written statement, as under:

National Broadband Mission (NBM) aims to fast-track the rapid expansion of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital and socio-economic divide, ensuring High-speed Broadband and Meaningful Connectivity for all across the country including the rural and remote areas.

The current status of main components of the National Broadband Mission in Tamil Nadu is as follows:

- i. Operational Optical fibre cable (OFC) connectivity (with 95% uptime) is available in 4,325 villages of Tamil Nadu as on January 2026.
- ii. Broadband Connectivity to anchor institutions including the Schools, Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Anganwadi Centre, and Panchayat Offices is 84.74% as on December 2025 in Tamil Nadu.
- iii. The National Average including Tamil Nadu, for the fixed broadband download Speeds is 61.55 Mbps including the State of Tamil Nadu (as per Ookla’s global speedtest index as on December 2025).
- iv. Right of Way (RoW) application average disposal time is 84.9 days for the financial year 2025-26 in Tamil Nadu.
- v. Rural Internet Subscribers per 100 population is 54.53 as on September 2025 in Tamil Nadu.

The Telecom infrastructure including Base Transceiver Stations (BTSS) and OFC have been laid in the State by private facility Providers (FPs) and under the Government funded various project/schemes to ensure high-speed broadband/internet connectivity. To address the challenges in rolling out broadband services, particularly in rural, remote, and underserved areas, the Government has undertaken several policy reforms and projects.

The details of policy reforms and Government funded projects are as follows:

- i. Government brought uniformity in RoW rules through the Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024 (effective from January 01, 2025) under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. Tamil Nadu has also been requested to issue necessary orders to implement the Right of Way Rules, 2024.
- ii. To streamline the processing of RoW permissions for the deployment of telecom infrastructure viz. OFC laying and telecom tower installation, Tamil Nadu has deployed a RoW Portal linked to the Central RoW portal in accordance with RoW Rules 2024.
- iii. Under the 4G saturation project 255 4G BTSS have been deployed to provide mobile coverage to 297 villages as on 31.12.2025.
- iv. Under the State-led model in Tamil Nadu, as on 31.12.2025, 10,869 Gram Panchayats (GPs) excluding Block Headquarters (BHQs) out of 12,525, have been made service ready under the BharatNet Project. A total of 3,08,907 route kilometres of OFC have been laid by all FPs,

including around 55,000 route kilometres OFC under the BharatNet Project. 808 Fibre to the Home (FTTH) connections have been provided through BharatNet in Tamil Nadu.

- v. The Amended BharatNet Program (ABP) in Tamil Nadu plans to provide FTTH connections to 5,27,506 households. The Program is to be implemented by the State in next 10 years.
- vi. A total amount of ₹1,883.17 crores has been allocated/disbursed upto 31.12.2025 and utilized, to provide telecom services in Tamil Nadu under various projects/schemes including BharatNet Phase II. In addition, Central Government intends to allocate ₹1,632 Cr (excluding GST), including OPEX for 10 years for Amended BharatNet Program, which will be implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

आदरणीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री @narendramodi जी के नेतृत्व में भारत की अमेंडेड भारतनेट योजना विश्व की सबसे बड़ी कनेक्टिविटी की पहल है। pic.twitter.com/JDk7nUtkTj

— Jyotiraditya M. Scindia (@JM_Scindia) February 12, 2026

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