

Government's support to MTNL:

- Refund of surrendered BWA (Broadband Wireless Access) spectrum in two service areas held by MTNL. Under this head, ₹ 4533.97 crore has been refunded to MTNL through bonds.
- The pension liability of MTNL staff who were absorbed from Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has been taken over by the Government.
- Financial support of ₹ 492.26 crore has been given to MTNL on account of liability arising from levy of Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT).
- Refund of ₹ 458.04 crore to MTNL on account of surrender of CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access) spectrum.
- Implementation of High Speed Internet on FTTH and Wi-Fi at the Hon'ble M.Ps residences by MTNL. The Project cost of about ₹ 43.2 crore was funded by DoT.

(c) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) or Competition Commission of India (CCI) have not reported any unfair competition among various telecom companies, and therefore the need for taking measures has not arisen.

Completion of first phase of BharatNet project

1675. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the first phase of BharatNet project, to provide broadband connectivity to one lakh Gram Panchayats, has been completed;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government is expecting to pre-empt its original target of March, 2019 for the second phase, by concluding it ahead of schedule by December this year;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the second phase of the project has been initiated for connecting the remaining 1.5 lakh Gram Panchayats; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir. BharatNet Phase I to connect 1,00,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) has been completed in December, 2017. As on 04.03.2018, a total length of 2,66,631 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) to connect 1,13,226 GPs has been laid, and a total of 1,03,730 GPs have been made Service Ready.

(b) The timeline to complete Phase-II of the Project is by March, 2019.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The second phase of the project has been initiated for connecting the remaining 1.5 lakh Gram Panchayats in the country.

Phase-II is being implemented through an optimal mix of media (*i.e.* OFC, radio and satellite), and by State-led Model, Private Sector, CPSU Model, laying of fresh fibre from Block to GPs and setting up of last mile architecture at all GPs. The project is targeted to be completed by March, 2019.

The implementation plans for States have been approved by Telecom Commission for Phase II of the project. Implementation of the Project by State-led model has been approved by Telecom Commission (TC) for Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Telangana, and MoUs have been signed with all these States.

For implementation of the project in Bihar and Punjab, Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) has floated a tender to select an agency. For the North East States, Satellite media for broadband connectivity to GPs has been approved and the implementation of the remaining States is by CPSU model.

Steps for 5G test bed

1676. SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken any steps for 5G test bed;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the budget allocation made for the purpose in the budget for 2018-19;
- (c) whether Government is planning to roll out 5G services in the near future; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) and (b) The Government is planning to set up 'Indigenous 5G Test Bed' in India in collaboration with Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc). The project envisages setting up of end-to-end Open 5G Test Bed for Indian companies and academia in distributed architecture model. The proposed test bed is likely to enhance national capability in telecom technology, develop indigenous Intellectual Property (IP) and give fillip to Indian telecom manufacturers. The duration of the project is 3 years and total budget involved in the project proposal is ₹ 224.0166 crore. The budget allocation in the budget for 2018-19 for this purpose is ₹ 134.48 crore.