

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) and (b) Under BharatNet Project Phase-I, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) fibre was used for connecting Gram Panchayats (GPs) by incremental cable. During implementation/operation of BharatNet, it was observed that at many places BSNL fibre was either damaged due to various development activities or showing excessive losses. Accordingly, a decision was taken by Union Cabinet to replace damaged/lossy fibres by laying fresh cable. As on date, 20,314 kms. of damaged/lossy fibre has been replaced.

(c) to (e) Progress of BharatNet Phase-II in Andhra Pradesh has been impacted due to suspension of ongoing implementation and review of project by State Government. As on 1st March 2020, 27 GPs out of total 11839 GPs in Andhra Pradesh have been made service ready. An amount of ₹227.12 crore has been disbursed in Andhra Pradesh under BharatNet phase-II project.

Impact of VRS in BSNL on BharatNet project

486. SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY VEMIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as of January, 2020, only 1.33 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been made service ready when compared to targeted 2.5 GPs under BharatNet;

(b) if so, the details of targets set in Phase-I and Phase-II, State-wise, and reasons for not achieving the target;

(c) what impact VRS in BSNL has on the BharatNet project; and

(d) by when the Ministry is going to achieve the above target and what plans it has for covering other villages in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) BharatNet project is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (approx. 2,50,000) in the country. As of January 2020, a total of 1,34,736 Gram Panchayats (including Block Headquarters) have been made service ready.

(b) The details are given in the Statement (*See below*).

BharatNet is a challenging project of mega nature and the GPs are widely dispersed across the country in rural and also remote areas. All out efforts are being made to

expeditiously implement the project. The delay in the implementation of the project is mainly on account of:—

- (i) Delay in the initial commencement of the project as the work on the project began in the second half of 2014 due to field survey of GPs and pilot testing of the technology model.
- (ii) In phase-I, only one media (*i.e.* is underground Optical Fibre Cable) has been used to cover GPs, and Right of Way (RoW) issues have delayed the implementation.
- (iii) Under phase-II, about 65,000 GPs in 8 States are under implementation under State-led model. For these States, the project is at various stages of implementation. The delay in the implementation by the States is also adversely affecting the completion of the project. For other States, not being implemented under State-led model, the implementation strategy is under the process of review.
- (iv) Under CPSU-led model in Phase-II, BSNL's work was also delayed due to its difficult financial condition.
- (v) In March 2020, pursuant to lockdown and movement restrictions due to COVID-19 in the country, the project progress is affected. However, with the beginning of unlock phase, all efforts are being made to expedite the project implementation.
- (c) The VRS in BSNL has no noticeable impact on the BharatNet project, as informed by BSNL.
- (d) The BharatNet phase-II project was envisaged to be completed by August, 2021. However, this time will now be extended as the pace of completion is affected by lockdown and restrictions on movement imposed by the various Governments due to COVID-19.

It is planned to cover nearly 6 lakh villages in the country in 1000 days from 15 August, 2020.

Statement*State-wise details of BharatNet project*

Sl. No.	State/UT	Phase-I		Phase-II	
		GPs planned (including Block Headquar- ters)	Service Ready GPs (including Block Headquar- ters)	GPs planned (including Block Headquar- ters)	Total Service Ready GPs (including Block Headquar- ters)
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Assam	1663	1624	1316	0
2.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	67	8	4	0
3.	Andhra Pradesh	1694	1659	11839	27
4.	Arunachal Pradesh	745	88	1119	326
5.	Bihar	6021	6003	2942	2787
6.	Chandigarh	13	13	0	0
7.	Chhattisgarh	4116	4111	6065	1373
8.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	21	21	0	0
9.	Daman and Diu	18	18	0	0
10.	Gujarat	6484	6154	7827	6169
11.	Haryana	6204	6193	0	0
12.	Himachal Pradesh	258	252	3011	74
13.	Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh	400	387	4399	672
14.	Jharkhand	2849	2508	1804	501
15.	Karnataka	6252	6247	0	0
16.	Kerala	1129	1129	0	0

1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Lakshadweep	0	0	10	0
18.	Madhya Pradesh	12701	12698	11027	635
19.	Maharashtra	15372	15297	12888	2174
20.	Manipur	664	326	2135	896
21.	Meghalaya	971	122	843	136
22.	Mizoram	275	41	501	196
23.	Nagaland	922	127	120	2
24.	Odisha	3992	3897	3103	643
25.	Puducherry	101	101	0	0
26.	Punjab	8088	8040	4852	4753
27.	Rajasthan	8967	8883	1184	30
28.	Sikkim	61	28	146	0
29.	Tamil Nadu	0	0	12909	0
30.	Telangana	2047	2047	11374	0
31.	Tripura	920	574	142	135
32.	Uttar Pradesh	28371	28238	27873	1604
33.	Uttarakhand	1866	1534	5840	0
34.	West Bengal	3065	2384	643	0
TOTAL		126317	120752	135916	23133

Internet connectivity and training centres for digital literacy

†487. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the initiatives taken by Government to improve access to internet connectivity and training centres for digital literacy; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.