

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2014
TO BE ANSWERED ON 8TH AUGUST, 2024**

PLAN TO MAKE BSNL FORMIDABLE PLAYER IN TELECOM INDUSTRY

2014 SHRI P. WILSON:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of steps taken, tentative timeline and reasons for delay in launching of 5G services by BSNL and MTNL;
- (b) the total number of network coverage towers available to BSNL and owned by BSNL, its turnover from 2019 onwards, staff strength, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has devised any plan to make BSNL as formidable player in telecom industry, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) whether Government has devised any plan to increase internet penetration in rural area, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

- (a) BSNL has already placed purchase order for procurement of indigenously developed 4G sites for pan India deployment. Supply of 4G equipment has started from September 2023. This equipment is upgradable to 5G.
- (b) As on 30.06.2024, there are 67,340 towers owned by BSNL. The total staff strength is 56,820 as on 30.06.2024.
- (c) Government has taken various steps for revival of MTNL and BSNL like revival package to bring down the operating costs, package for measures such as infusing fresh capital, restructuring debt and meeting viability gap and package for the allotment of 4G/5G spectrum.
- (d) Government is implementing various schemes under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for internet penetration in rural areas:-
 - Mobile schemes / projects including 4G Saturation scheme to provide coverage to all uncovered villages in the country.
 - BharatNet project is being implemented to provide broadband connectivity to all the Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. Further, scope of BharatNet has been expanded beyond Gram Panchayats (GPs) to provide connectivity on demand to all inhabited villages.
