

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1132
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05TH DECEMBER, 2024**

STRUCTURAL AND PROCEDURAL REFORMS IN THE TELECOM SECTOR

1132 # DR. SUMER SINGH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of structural and procedural reforms initiated by Government in the telecom sector to promote and foster its growth;
- (b) the steps taken by Government to facilitate trade and investment in the telecom sector; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to bridge the digital divide in the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) Government has brought various reforms in telecom sector in last 10 years. This has led to a transformation in telecom sector and resulted in:

- Increase of Telecom subscribers from 93.3 crores in March 2014 to 120.5 crores in June 2024;
- Increase of internet users from 25.15 crores in March 2014 to 96.9 crores in June 2024;
- The cost of data has reduced drastically from ₹269 per GB in March 2014 to ₹8.31 per GB in June 2024;
- Fastest rollout of 5G services in the world with 4.6 lakhs Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) deployed across the country;
- Increase in the number of Base Trans-receivers Station (BTS) from 6.49 lakhs in March 2014 to 29.4 lakhs in October 2024.
- Cumulative investment of Rs. 3,925 Cr., with Sales of Rs. 65,320 Cr. (including exports of Rs. 12,384 Cr.) for telecom equipment manufactured under Production Linked Incentive Scheme as on 30.09.2024.
- 126 start-ups / MSMEs supported leading to 106 IPR generation and creation of 1156 jobs under Digital Communication Innovation Square (DCIS).

Some of the major reforms initiated by the Government are as below:

- (i) Rationalization of definition of adjusted gross revenue;
- (ii) Allowing spectrum trading/sharing;

- (iii) Incentivizing spectrum sharing;
- (iv) Ensuring adequate spectrum through open and transparent auction;
- (v) Permission for 100% foreign direct investment(FDI) in telecom sector under automatic route subject to safeguards;
- (vi) Launch of Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal for centralized Right of Way (RoW) approvals;
- (vii) To facilitate faster and easier deployment of telecom infrastructure, the Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024 has been notified on 17.09.2024 and will come into force on 01.01.2025;
- (viii) Simplification of Standing Advisory Committee for Radio Frequency Allocation (SACFA) clearance process for installing telecom towers;
- (ix) With an aim to achieve Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business, 109-compliance burdens removed or reduced;
- (x) Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme to facilitate investment in the manufacturing of telecom equipment and reduce import dependency of the telecom industry;
- (xi) Government has enacted the Telecommunications Act, 2023 in December 2023.

The Government is further committed to bring reforms for continued growth of telecom sector, improved quality of services, safety of the users and security of the telecommunication networks.

(c) To bridge the digital divide, the Government is implementing various schemes through Digital Bharat Nidhi (erstwhile Universal Service Obligation Fund) to provide the telecom coverage to all uncovered villages. And, the Union Cabinet has approved the Amended BharatNet Program with funding of ₹1,39,579 crore for extending the scope of BharatNet to provide broadband connectivity to all 2.64 lakh Gram Panchayats and approximately 3.8 lakh villages on demand basis across 28 States and 8 UTs.
