

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 556
ANSWERED ON 23RD JULY, 2025**

DELAYS IN BHARATNET PROJECT

556. SHRI SHIRIRANG APPA CHANDU BARNE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is a repeated delays in the BharatNet project, with deadlines missed in 2014, 2015, 2019 and 2023;
- (b) if so, the details of the revised timeline for achieving 100% Gram Panchayat connectivity;
- (c) the details of the specific measures being taken to avoid further delays, particularly in challenging terrains;
- (d) the current status of the 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats targeted under the BharatNet project, specifically regarding service readiness and active utilization of the provided connectivity as of July 2025, State-wise, particularly Maharashtra;
- (e) whether the CAG and other reports have highlighted underutilisation of funds and infrastructure created under BharatNet; and
- (f) if so, the steps taken/being taken by the Government to ensure optimal utilisation of existing infrastructure and to address the lack of awareness and digital literacy among target beneficiaries?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) BharatNet is a mega project, widely dispersed across remotest corners of the country, covering difficult terrains (Hilly/ Rocky) and also difficult to access Left-wing extremism (LWE) affected areas. The project implementation faced challenges due to various reasons like delay in obtaining Right of Way permissions from State agencies especially in forest areas, movement restrictions due to Covid- pandemic, damage of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) due to development works such as water pipe line laying, road widening and other construction activities.

In the meanwhile Amended BharatNet Program is approved by Cabinet, under which appointment of BSNL as Project management agency, setting up of Central and State Network operation centre (NOC) for monitoring , OFC connectivity from block to GP in ring topology and use of alternative technology (radio/Satellite) to ensure its smooth implementation. The government has notified Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024 that has streamlined RoW clearance process. The timeline for completion of the construction phase under the Amended BharatNet Program is three years from date of signing of agreement and then O&M for seven years will start.

(d) Total number of Gram Panchayats (GP) made service-ready under BharatNet across the country including Maharashtra is 2,14,325. State/UT-wise list of Gram Panchayats (GPs) provided with broadband connectivity under the BharatNet project is available on Digital Bharat Nidhi website (<https://usof.gov.in/en/home>).

(e) & (f) No CAG audit report on BharatNet has been received in this Ministry till date.
