

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2704
ANSWERED ON:17.03.2006
INDO-CHINA CO- OPERATION IN IT SECTOR
Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

:-

- (a) whether India and China have decided to cooperate in production of low cost computers for their rural masses as well as for exports;
- (b) if so, whether any agreement has been signed in this regard;
- (c) whether India has requested China to share their expertise in the hardware sector;
- (d) if so, the response of China thereto;
- (e) whether India has launched an ambitious plan to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural people;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) the manner in which the agreement will help to bridge the gap between urban and rural people of India?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY(DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) and (b) : During the course of Minister's visit to China in July, 2000, an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for bilateral cooperation in the IT sector was signed between India and China, which, inter-alia includes computers and provides the scope for establishing manufacturing joint venture of information technology equipment. The MOU has expired in July, 2005.

(c): No, Sir.

(d): Does not arise.

(e) and (f): Yes, Sir. The Government has launched the following programmes to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas:-

#NIC has established 487 Community Information Centres (CICs) at block level in North Eastern States with the objective of providing Internet access, e-mail, training and basic e-Governance services. NIC has also established CICs in 116 blocks in Jammu & Kashmir. A project on setting up of 71 CICs in Government schools of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands has been approved.

(CICs set up - Arunachal Pradesh(56), Assam (219), Manipur (33), Meghalaya (32), Mizoram (26), Nagaland (52), Tripura (29), Sikkim (40), Jammu & Kashmir (113) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2).

E-Governance Scheme for development of Core infrastructure entitled `State Wide Area Network` (SWAN) covering 6000 Blocks, Tahsils and District Hqrs. was approved by the Government in March, 2005 with an estimated outlay of Rs. 3334 crore for the entire country. Under the scheme, proposals from 20 States/UTs have already been sanctioned.

Provision of Internet access and IT enabled services to the community at large and facilitating establishment of 100,000 Common Service Centres (CSCs) in rural areas across the country with Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) using 2 Mbps connectivity being provided through SWANs (State Wide Area networks) under its National e-Governance Plan.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) under its `Internet Dhaba` scheme, provides Internet Access to franchisees of Internet Dhabas in the rural Block Headquarters.As on December 31, 2005, a total of 4175 Internet Dhabas have been set up through franchisees in various States in the country.

To enable wide proliferation of content development in Indian languages software tools and fonts in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, have been made available.

Media Lab Asia has initiated project on Rural Net and Rural Wi-Fi for the rural community.

(g): No, Sir. No such agreement has been signed.