

## BharatNet Phase 1: Target Achieved Through Meticulous Planning and Focused Implementation at Ground Level;

Ministry of Communications

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## Achievers Felicitated by the Dept of Telecom

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Government has achieved a significant milestone under the BharatNet by completing Phase-1 of the project by connecting over **one lakh Gram Panchayats** (GP) across the country with high speed optical fibre network as per the declared deadline of 31 Dec 2017. BharatNet network built under Phase 1 envisages delivery of high-speed broadband services in over 2.5 lakh villages benefitting more than 200 million rural Indians.

At a function held here, Union Minister for Communications Shri Manoj Sinha said that the vision and the mission of the country is to connect India to realise the goal of Prime Minister's Digital India by bridging the digital divide. Describing the BharatNet as the world's largest rural broadband project created on the mantra of Create, Collaborate and Conquer, Shri Sinha said that the project will generate massive employment opportunities both direct and indirect in the country in days to come. He underlined the need to complete the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the BharatNet well before the target of March, 2019 to usher in a rural digital revolution by connecting 2 lakh and 50,000 Gram Panchayats with broadband network. The Minister asked the officials to include and enforce the clause of financial incentive for speedy execution of Phase-2 of the project and said that the infrastructure created under BharatNet will be a national asset, accessible on a non-discriminatory basis to the service providers. The project aims to provide affordable broadband services to citizens and institutions in rural and remote areas, in partnership with States and the private sector.

Under Phase 1 of the project, till 31st May 2014 the work had been started in 4,918 GPs and 358 km Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) was pulled and only 59 GPs were made service ready. Till 30th June 2016 work had been started in 84,834 GPs and 1,24,817 km OFC pulled covering 53,557 GPs with 7,229 GPs made Service Ready. As on 31st Dec 2017, 2,54,895 km OFC has been laid covering 1,09,926 GPs out of which 1,01,370 GPs have been made Service Ready.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, Department of Telecom Ms Aruna Sundararajan said that to complete the Phase-1 of BharatNet, the entire eco-system of the department responded to the call of the Hon'ble Minister Shri Manoj Sinha. She said that it has given boost to **Make-in-India** as the key highlight of the project is that the telecom equipment deployed in it has been **fully designed, developed and manufactured in India**. She said that the project also achieved a global record of laying of 800 kilometres of optical fibre per day. She said that the BharatNet infrastructure is expected to catalyse digital delivery of services for the rural poor – viz. health, education, livelihood, skills, e-agriculture and e-commerce. The tariff for BharatNet was also revised to attract more Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to use the infrastructure to provide high-speed broadband services in the rural areas through Wi-Fi, FTTH, and for developing utilisation models by TSPs and Common Service Centres (CSC).

The Department of Telecom felicitated the key performers and stakeholders who significantly contributed to achieve the target. Shri Manoj Sinha gave away the awards for the Best Performing States, States which covered all the GPs, Best Utilisation of BharatNet, Best performing implementation partners, Best performing equipment supply partners, Best performing OFC supply partners, Best technology partners, and significant individual contributors.

Under the award categories, UP(East), Maharashtra, MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand were adjudged as the Best performing States which implemented BharatNet Phase 1. Kerala, Karnataka and Haryana were the States which covered all the GPs under the Project. Karnataka bagged the award for Best Utilisation of BharatNet. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd and CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd received the awards for the Best performing implementation partners. While Tejas Networks and Indian Telephone Industries Ltd were honoured with the Best performing equipment supply partners, Finolex Cables, Sterlite Technologies and Vindhya Telelinks Ltd were bestowed with the Best performing Optical Fibre Cable( OFC) supply partners. Centre for Development of Telematics(CDOT) and National Informatics Centre(NIC) were given the Best technology partners award.

Shri Mahmood Ahmed, JAF, USOF, Shri Rupendra Kumar, Director(BB), USOF, Smt. Deepika Khosla, CGM, BBNL, Shri Deepak Chanduka, CGM, BBNL, Shri Shahnawaz Alam, CGM, BBNL, Shri Anil Kumar Gupta, CGM, BBNL, Shri Vinod Kumar, CGM, BBNL, Shri P K Panda, GM, BBNL and Shri B P Meena, GM, BBNL received the Significant individual contributors' award from the Minister.

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