

KERALA TO PROVIDE FREE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CONNECTIONS TO THE POOR SOON

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues Related to Poverty, Inclusion, Employment & Sustainable Development

Thiruvananthapuram: The Kerala government has announced that its ambitious Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) project, envisaged to provide free internet access to the poor, would be rolled out by December this year.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday informed the decision after a meeting with the heads of companies of the consortium executing the 1,500 crore K-FON project.

"Kerala is the first state to declare the internet as a fundamental right of the citizen. As part of this, the K-FON project was launched to provide quality internet free of cost to the poor and at affordable rates to others. No other state in India has implemented such a scheme. Despite the delay due to the lockdown, M V Gautam, CMD of consortium leader BEL, has promised to complete the project by December this year," Vijayan said.

The consortium comprises public sector companies, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Railtel, and private companies such as SRIT and LS Cables. The project is being implemented by Kerala State IT Infrastructure Limited and Kerala State Electricity Board.

Optical fibre cables were being laid across the state using KSEB posts. At a press meet here, the Chief Minister said the project would be of immense benefit for the state as the K-FON network would provide internet connectivity to schools, hospitals, government offices and other institutions. Besides, it would act as a "catalyst for the knowledge- based economy envisioned by the State."

Noting that the importance and relevance of internet will grow in the post-COVID-19 scenario, he said, "the use of internet in sectors such as education and banking will greatly increase."

"K-Fon will be a major support for the government's efforts to develop Kerala as the world's leading industrial, educational and tourism destination," he added.

This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text. Only the headline has been changed.

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