

Parliamentary Panel Flags Out Gaps in BharatNet Rollout Implementation

The Standing Committee on Communications and IT submitted its 32nd Report highlighting implementation gaps in the BharatNet project.

BharatNet is India's flagship rural broadband project aiming to connect all Gram Panchayats with high-speed optical fibre network.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology submitted its **32nd Report** on **Digital Bharat Nidhi**.
- As of **February 28, 2026**, BharatNet Points of Presence were operational in only **78,899** Gram Panchayats out of **2.64 lakh** across India.
- A **Point of Presence** (PoP) serves as a local network hub from which broadband internet connectivity is extended to institutions and end-users.
- The panel recommended a comprehensive, model-wise, and state-wise **performance audit** to address key bottlenecks in project execution.
- The report was prepared based on official data submitted by the **Department of Telecommunications** under the Ministry of Communications.

STATICS & SYLLABUS FOCUS

BharatNet project was originally launched in **October 2011** as **National Optical Fibre Network** (NOFN) and renamed in **2015**.

The **Universal Service Obligation Fund** (USOF) was established under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, **2003**.

The **Telecommunications Act, 2023** replaced the USOF with '**Digital Bharat Nidhi**' to expand telecom connectivity.

Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL), established in 2012, was merged with **BSNL** in **July 2022** to speed up implementation.

Ministry of Communications is the nodal ministry overseeing digital communication infrastructure in India.

National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) was unveiled in **2018** with the core goal of providing 'Broadband for All'.

REVISION FLASHCARD

BharatNet, launched in 2011 as NOFN, aims to connect all ~2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats with broadband optical fibre.

Syllabus Relevance: High relevance for Unit 1 Science & Tech (IT applications) and Unit 2 Current Events (National Infrastructure Projects).

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