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Government Strengthens Rural 4G Connectivity Through 4G Saturation Project

CHENNAI – 12 Nov, 2026 The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is making sustained efforts to bridge the digital divide and strengthen telecommunications infrastructure across rural, remote and underserved areas of the country. These efforts have resulted in a significant reduction of nearly 75% in the number of villages without 4G connectivity, from 45,180 in 2022 to 11,372 in 2026, marking substantial progress towards expanding digital connectivity across rural India.

DoT's 4G Saturation Project has played an important role in this expansion. The project was designed to provide 4G connectivity to 24,680 previously unconnected villages, ensuring that people in remote and underserved areas can access reliable mobile communication services and the benefits of digital connectivity. Private telecom service providers have also contributed to expanding rural 4G coverage through their network expansion initiatives.

BSNL's 18,291 sites commissioned under the 24,680-site 4G saturation rollout plan are carrying substantial data traffic in rural areas. In October 2026, these sites served a maximum of 10,21,048 active users in a day, who together used over 1.86 crore GB (18,659,170 GB) of data, an average of 18.3 GB per user in the month. With about 56 active users per site on average, each site is serving dispersed rural communities that were earlier outside serviceable 4G coverage.

The Government has also sanctioned an additional 26,000 mobile network sites for the next phase of expansion to address the remaining connectivity gaps. Extending connectivity to remote and geographically difficult locations remains a key challenge due to difficult terrain, high infrastructure costs, scattered settlements and the presence of remote tribal habitations. The Department is continuing its efforts to address these challenges through coordinated action with BSNL and other telecom service providers.

Way Forward

Moving forward, the Department of Telecommunications will continue to prioritise the coverage of remaining unconnected villages, particularly in remote, tribal and aspirational regions. The deployment of additional mobile network sites, expansion of network-sharing arrangements and improved utilisation of existing telecom infrastructure will remain important strategies for achieving wider rural connectivity. Greater coordination with telecom service providers and targeted interventions in geographically challenging areas will further accelerate network expansion. These efforts are aimed at ensuring inclusive digital access and enabling rural communities to benefit from digital governance, education, healthcare, financial services and other essential digital platforms.