

TELECOMMUNICATION CONNECTIVITY.

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BACKGROUND:

(i) The present telecom facility in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is absolutely inadequate. A recent study carried out by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (report submitted on 22.07.2014 to Department of Telecommunication, Government of India) for improving telecom facility in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep revealed that the total requirement of bandwidth in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 55.26Gbps. Bandwidth available as on date is mere 0.456 Gbps.

INITIATIVES AND PRESENT STATUS

Short-term Measures

Minimum requirement to improve telecom bandwidth for slightly better internet and mobile connectivity is 1(one) Gbps i.e. additional 0.600 Gbps. It is proposed to hire additional 0.600 Gbps from THAICOM 7 and GSAT.

(ii) Present Status:-

The expenditure involved for hiring of 0.600 Gbps bandwidth from THAICOM7 and GSAT spread over for three years has been estimated as Rs.383.70 crore to be reimbursed to BSNL. Additional Rs.192.93 crore is required for ground equipments, provision of 2G voice mobile coverage to uncovered villages and for augmentation of intra-island OFC network. In the last financial year (2014-15) there was an allocation of Rs.150 Crore which could not be utilized due to finalisation of the proposal. In the current financial year (2015-16), a budgetary provision of Rs. 91.50 crore has been made. The proposal is under consideration in Department of Telecommunication for approval of Expenditure Finance Committee.

(a) Long-term Measure

To meet the overall requirement of 55.26 Gbps for the next 20-25 years, it has been proposed laying of submarine optical fibre cable from Chennai to Port Blair. The proposal was originally conceived way back in 2002 and formal shape was given in 2008. Total financial implication for laying of optical fibre cable to meet the overall requirement of 55.26 Gbps for the next 20-25 years would be around Rs.1600 crore. Recurring expenditure has been roughly estimated as Rs.45 crore per annum.