

## Participation of rural India and villages in Digital India is very important

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“In the coming 1000 days, every village in the country will be connected with optical fibre cable,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address on the occasion of 74th Independence Day earlier today. Shri Modi mentioned that before 2014, only 5 dozen panchayats in the country were connected with optical fiber cable. In the last five years, nearly 1.5 lakh gram panchayats in the country have been connected with optical fiber cable. He further added that Participation of rural India and villages in Digital India is very important for balanced development of India. To enable this we will rapidly expand our optical fibre network. This will reach all the 6 lakh villages within 1,000 days.

Expressing his gratitude to the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for this important announcement, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, the Minister for Electronics & IT and Communications tweeted, “Today you have entrusted Department of Telecommunications with the responsibility to connect all the villages of India by optical fibre Internet in 1000 days. It's a game changer for Digital India. With your inspiration we will do it.”

During the 74th Independence Day speech PM also announced that in the next 1000 days, Lakshadweep will be connected with submarine optical fiber cable. “We have around 1,300 islands. Keeping in mind their geographical location and their significance in the development of the nation, work to begin new projects in some of these islands is underway. We have chosen some islands for rapid development. Recently, we connected Andaman and Nicobar Islands with an undersea cable for a better internet. Next, we will connect Lakshadweep,” he said while delivering his Independence Day speech from the iconic Red Fort. Earlier this week PM Modi inaugurated the first-ever undersea optic fiber link between Chennai and Andaman and Nicobar to ensure high-speed broadband connectivity for the Union Territory (UT) at par with services in the cities like Delhi and Chennai.

While commenting on announcement for high speed Internet services in Lakshadweep Islands, Shri

Prasad said in a tweet that today Prime Minister set a target of 1000 days to provide submarine optical fibre connectivity to these islands. Like linking Andaman & Nicobar islands Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications will fast track this as well.

OFC connectivity to the villages and submarine OFC to the Lakshadweep islands will help the people in rural areas/villages and those in Lakshadweep islands in getting cheaper & better connectivity and all the benefits of Digital India, especially in improving online education, tele-medicine, banking system, online trading, boosting tourism and skill development etc.

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