

'India enters age of digital dominance'

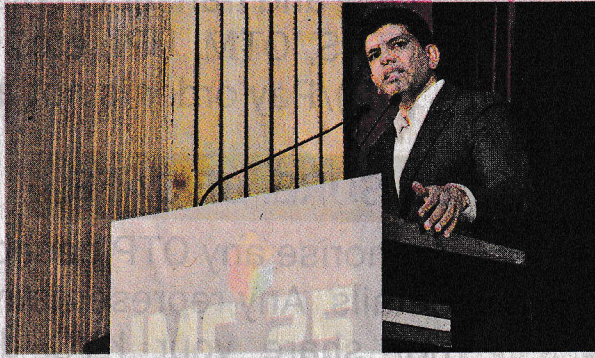
Our Bureau
Bengaluru

India is set to invest an additional \$18 billion to expand and maintain its rural broadband infrastructure, aiming to connect 40,000 more gram panchayats, highlighted Minister of State (MoS) for Communications & Rural Development Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani.

DIGITAL DIVIDE

Speaking at an India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2025-organised Roadshow in Bengaluru, Pemmasani noted that the digital divide from over a decade ago had transformed into digital dominance. The country has almost 1.2 billion mobile subscribers, with the second-largest network in the world. The roadshow was organised by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

"Around one billion have broadband connectivity. This is 1,452 per cent times



NEW INDIA. The nation has the largest rural connectivity with 2.2 lakh villages covered, said Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development

compared to 10 years ago. We also have the largest rural connectivity with Bharatnet, with close to 2.2 lakh villages covered. Over 95 per cent of the villages have 4G, and we have rolled out the fastest 5G in the world," he said.

MODERNISING LAWS

The Minister highlighted efforts to modernise outdated laws by aligning them with a future-ready regulatory framework while simplifying licensing processes and easing regulatory burdens.

Spectrum management has shifted from a scarcity driven model to one focused on efficiency, paving the way for the introduction of the PLI scheme.

"Around ₹4,000 crore of investments came from private organisations, which generated ₹80,000 crore revenue and 25,000 jobs. Through the technology development fund, we have given close to ₹500 crore to 120 high-tech start-ups. Hopefully, all of these will enable us to develop

With almost 1.2 billion mobile subscribers, India has the second-largest network in the world

quantum communications, automated networks and indigenous core infrastructure. With 6G technology, we want to be able to contribute to global standards. We missed the boat for 2G to 5G. Hopefully, at least 10 per cent of the patents can be from India by 2030," he said.

LOWEST RATES

India has also worked on indigenous 4G and 5G technology with start-ups and government organisations such as C-DoT, said Pemmasani.

Today, the country stands as the second-largest phone manufacturer, exporting close to ₹1.8 lakh-crore worth a year. Alongside, India has the lowest data connectivity rates, allowing millions to connect, he said.