

PRESS RELEASE

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Citizens in India's Red Corridor turn to Data to Usher in Change; beat Left Wing Extremism

Powered by VNL technology, data usage on BSNL network in Naxal hit areas surges to record 400 GB per day

NEW DELHI – The winds of change are now sweeping India's hitherto impregnable Red Corridor. Riding high on availability of abundant data, citizens in Naxalite hit districts across several states are now joining the mainstream with easy access to a host of government and financial services. According to India's state-owned telecom operator BSNL and Indian telecom gear manufacturer VNL that set up telecom network in Left Wing extremism impacted areas, data usage has surged to an all-time high of more than 400 Gigabytes per day, thereby ushering in development and prosperity. It is heartening to note that data usage continues to rise every passing day.

In 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs had identified setting up of robust mobile communication network as a key component of its overall strategy to combat Naxal menace. BSNL was entrusted with the task of implementing this project, which picked India's home-grown companies, VNL and HFCL to execute the same in a record period of 18 months. The two companies set up over 2,000 solar powered mobile tower sites, which have been successfully working for two years now.

Commenting on the dramatic rise in data usage, Mr Anupam Shrivastava, CMD, BSNL, remarked, "We congratulate both VNL and HFCL for working together with BSNL and transforming the LWE region. We always believed that Indian companies have great potential and if given little support, they can become world players. As per Government of India's initiatives, BSNL will continue to provide services in most difficult areas with the help of such Indian companies."

The world's largest green mobile network, which provides voice & data to more than 20,000 villages in LWE areas, highlights triumph of VNL's Indian-designed technology. None of the foreign solutions could work in these inhospitable and remote terrain.

"Data usage is not just taking off in urban centers, but it is fast powering change in the hinterland and we are proud that we could contribute to this noble venture," said VNL's

Founder Chairman Mr Rajiv Mehrotra. Even tribal areas, which did not have access to even voice connectivity until recently, are now consuming data for banking and other applications. This is not just music to our ears, but it is also a validation of India's digital drive and "Make in India" initiative."

"We thank the Department of Telecom and USOF for their vision and support that enabled this network to be setup in some of India's most inhospitable and challenging areas," he added.

Some features of this unique mobile connectivity project are:

1. Major milestone under the PM's PRAGATI (Pro-active Governance and Timely Implementation) Pariyojana, monitored closely by the PMO.
2. A key success of the "Make in India" program as it was executed by Indian companies using Indian technology and products.
3. Uses sustainable technology and is off-grid – all towers and equipment are solar powered.
4. The project is a major step in realising the Digital India dream, which seeks to connect the deepest interiors and remotest corners of the country.

ABOUT VNL

Apart from developing rapidly deployable networks for disaster and emergency situations, India-based VNL designs, manufactures, installs and operates sustainable, mobile and broadband solutions for rural and remote locations. VNL Mobile solutions are operating in more than 15 countries in three continents. VNL also makes secure communication platforms for homeland security, communications and remote industrial centres.

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