

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
RAJYA SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3418
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31ST MARCH, 2023**

MOBILE TOWERS IN REMOTE AREAS

3418. SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the efforts made/being made by Government for installing mobile towers in remote areas of country especially in the North Eastern States, the details thereof;
- (b) the time frame by which the vision of revolution in communication is likely to be fulfilled in remote villages and the efforts made by Government in this regard, so far; and
- (c) whether any policy framework has been prepared by Government in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) to (c) As per data received from Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), field units of Department of Telecom and State Governments as of March '2022, there are 6,44,131 villages (villages are as per data of Registrar General of India as of November 2019) in the country. Around 6,05,230 villages are having mobile coverage. North Eastern States have 45,934 villages. Out of these, 36,608 villages have mobile connectivity, while 35,817 villages among them are covered with 3G/4G mobile connectivity. State wise coverage details of North Eastern States are at **Annexure-I**.

Government and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) provide telecommunication connectivity in the country in a phased manner. Government through funding from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is implementing various schemes for providing mobile network coverage in all uncovered villages of the country including North Eastern States. The major USOF schemes are at **Annexure-II**. Also, to facilitate faster and easier deployment of telecom infrastructure, across the country the Government has formulated the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 amended in 2017, 2021 and 2022.

Annexure-I

Annexure referred to in reply of part (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3418 to be answered on 31st March, 2023 raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament regarding "Mobile Towers In Remote Areas"

State Name	Total no. of Villages as per RGI Data (31-11-2019)	No. of Villages having mobile connectivity	No. of villages having 3G /4G coverage
Arunachal Pradesh	5993	2912	2371
Assam	26429	24346	24266
Manipur	2612	2142	2081
Meghalaya	7100	4672	4598
Mizoram	867	626	623
Nagaland	1535	1115	1083
Sikkim	461	157	157
Tripura	937	638	638
Grand Total	45934	36608	35817

Annexure referred to in reply of part (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3418 to be answered on 31st March, 2023 raised by Hon'ble Member of Parliament regarding "Mobile Towers In Remote Areas"

Details of schemes/projects to improve the communication network/system in rural and remote areas across the country:

- i. USOF 4G Saturation Scheme to cover 24,680 uncovered villages with 4G and 6,279 villages having 2G/3G connectivity are to be upgraded to 4G. The estimated project cost is Rs. 26,316 Cr.
- ii. Provision of 4G Mobile Services in North Eastern Region of the country under Comprehensive Telecom Development Program for NER. The estimated cost for schemes is Rs. 3637 Cr.
 - a. Provision of Mobile Services in Uncovered villages in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh (National Highways only) of NER and seamless coverage along National Highway
 - b. Provision of 4G Mobile Services in Uncovered villages of Meghalaya and seamless coverage along National Highway
 - c. Provision of 4G Mobile Services in Uncovered Villages of Arunachal Pradesh and 2 Districts of Assam
- iii. Hiring of 10 Gbps International Bandwidth through BSNL for Internet Connectivity to Agartala from BSCCL, Bangladesh via Cox Bazar. Approval has been issued for hiring of additional 10 Gbps International Bandwidth also.
- iv. Provision of 4G mobile connectivity in 354 uncovered villages of J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Border area & other priority areas. The estimated project cost is Rs. 337 Cr.
- v. Provision of 4G mobile connectivity in 7,287 Aspirational District villages (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha). The estimated cost for projects is Rs. 6466 Cr.
- vi. Under LWE Phase-I scheme, 2,343 mobile towers have been installed in LWE areas. Provision for upgradation of LWE Phase-I from 2G to 4G has also been made. The estimated project cost is Rs. 3567 Cr.
- vii. Under LWE Phase-II scheme, 2,542 mobile towers at Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) identified locations are approved across the LWE States for provision of 4G mobile services. The estimated project cost is Rs. 2211 Cr.
- viii. Scheme for providing 4G mobile connectivity in 502 uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts in four States, namely, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The estimated project cost is Rs. 686 Cr.

- ix. Provision of 4G Mobile Coverage in 85 uncovered Villages and seamless 4G Mobile coverage of NH223 in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The estimated project cost is Rs. 130 Cr.
- x. Laying of submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and Andaman & Nicobar Islands for providing connectivity to Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The estimated project cost is Rs. 1224 Cr.
- xi. Submarine OFC connectivity between Kochi and Lakshadweep Islands. The estimated project cost is Rs. 1072 Cr.
- xii. BharatNet project to create network to connect all the Gram Panchayats and villages with broadband infrastructure. The total funding of the BharatNet (Phase-I and Phase-II), approved by the Cabinet, is Rs 42,068 crores (exclusive of GST, Octroi and local taxes).
