

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 121
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19th DECEMBER, 2018**

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY IN THE NORTH-EAST REGION

*121. SHRI NINONG ERING:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that there is no proper mobile connectivity along the border in the North-East Region and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether a joint survey was conducted by the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Border Security Force (BSF) in the North-East area of the country and if so, the details, the objectives and the outcome thereof; and
- (c) the number of mobile towers installed and proposed to be installed on the International border in the North-East Region along with the time frame set in this regard, State/UT-wise?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

- (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *121 FOR 19TH DECEMBER, 2018 ON “MOBILE CONNECTIVITY IN THE NORTH-EAST REGION”.

(a) The Government is aware of lack of mobile connectivity in certain parts of North East Region and has already initiated a series of telecom projects to provide mobile services throughout the region in spite of various constraints such as difficult terrain, scattered habitations and insurgency.

Under Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER), funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), installation of 6673 mobile towers for 8621 identified uncovered villages, 321 mobile towers for National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the region has been approved. The State-wise details of mobile towers to be installed is given at **Annexure-I**.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has been given the responsibility of installing 2817 mobile towers for providing mobile coverage in 4119 uncovered villages of Arunachal Pradesh and two districts of Assam vide Agreement dated 16th January 2018. Another agreement to install 2004 mobile towers in the rest of the region (except Meghalaya) has been entrusted to M/s Bharti Airtel Limited and M/s Bharti Hexacom Limited on 08.12.2017. Further, the Government has approved installation of 2173 mobile towers in Meghalaya in May 2018.

(b) Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had requested Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to assist in providing telecom connectivity initially at 1683 Border Out Posts (BOPs) of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) i.e. Assam Rifles, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) etc. spread throughout the country including in the North Eastern Region. As per requirement of MHA, Detailed Project Report (DPR) for 1683 sites was prepared by BSNL after conducting a joint survey and forwarded to MHA in May 2016. Thereafter, MHA intimated the revised demand for connectivity including broadband using Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) at around 3000 BOPs. Preliminary estimates for wireless as well as OFC-based connectivity for these BOPs were provided to MHA in October, 2017 and January, 2018.

In subsequent review meetings of Empowered Committee on Border Infrastructure, it was suggested to explore the use of alternate technologies for providing telecom connectivity (Wi Fi based) using the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) connectivity to reduce estimated costs and bring about convergence with existing schemes/ projects.

(c) There are about 1,511 Base Transceiver Stations within 10 kilometers of the International Border in this region, installed by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) namely, M/s Bharti Airtel, M/s Bharti Hexacom, M/s BSNL, M/s Reliance Jio Infocomm, M/s Vodafone Idea. State-wise distribution is provided at **Annexure-II**.

For installation of mobile towers under Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for NER, the time frame is 18 months from the date of signing Agreement with USOF.

State-wise distribution of mobile towers envisaged to be installed in NER under USOF programs:

S.No.	STATE/UT	No. of Villages to be covered	Number of Towers for Uncovered Villages	No. of Towers along National Highways
1	Arunachal Pradesh	2805	1893	149
2	Assam	2503	1874	33
3	Manipur	528	384	53
4	Meghalaya	2374	2162	11
5	Mizoram	252	227	19
6	Nagaland	134	112	48
7	Sikkim	23	19	1
8	Tripura	2	2	7
	TOTAL	8621	6673	321

Annexure-II

BTS Count installed by TSPs within 10 KM of International Border in NER is as follows:

BTS Count installed by TSPs within 10 KM of International Border is as follows													
Sr.	TSP Name	India- Bangladesh				India - Bhutan		India-Myanmar				India-China	Grand Total
		Meghalaya	Tripura	Mizoram	Assam (within 5 KM)	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam (within 5 KM)	Mizoram	Manipur	Nagaland	Arunachal Pradesh	Arunachal Pradesh	
1	Bharti Hexacom / Bharti Airtel	56	380	4	91	12	18	25	9	11	4	0	610
2	Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited	36	188	3	25	0	1	3	5	7	5	0	273
3	Reliance Jio	37	151	2	66	0	13	8	3	1	0	0	281
4	Vodafone Idea	20	255	1	58	0	4	6	3	0	0	0	347
Total		149	974	10	240	12	36	42	20	19	9	0	1511
