

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 398  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2018**

**USE OF BANGLADESHI SIM CARD**

398. SHRI S. RAJENDRAN:  
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:  
SHRI T. RADHAKRISHNAN:  
SHRI ASHOK SHANKARRAO CHAVAN:  
SHRI S.R. VIJAYAKUMAR:  
KUNWAR HARIBANSH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that BSF personnel were forced to use Bangladeshi SIM cards in the north-east due to connectivity problem;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for the same;
- (c) whether his Ministry has taken any steps to improve the mobile connectivity in border areas of North-Eastern region and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve the mobile connectivity in border areas?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) No such incident of forcing any Border Security Force (BSF) personnel to use Bangladeshi SIM cards has been reported to the Government. In case of locations where Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited's (BSNL) mobile network signal is weak, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) seek prior approval of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to go-ahead with change of the mobile service provider. Accordingly, approval of the competent authority was conveyed to BSF in view of their proposal. Consequently, BSF's proposal for availing mobile phone connections at 263 such locations through alternative mobile service provider(s) having valid license granted by Department of Telecommunications, Government of India stands approved.

(c) & (d) The Government is making sincere efforts to provide affordable tele-connectivity to all the inhabited areas of North Eastern Region (NER) including border

areas of the country, and working on a “Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for North East Region” through Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF).

Under Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for North Eastern Region, M/s Bharti Airtel & M/s Bharti Hexacom have been entrusted to set up over 2004 mobile towers to connect about 2128 villages in Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, parts of Assam and National Highways in North-Eastern States. Besides, M/s BSNL is also installing 2,817 mobile towers to provide coverage in 4,119 uncovered villages in other parts of North East. Further, on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018, the Cabinet has approved the provisioning of 2G & 4G Mobile Services in 2173 uncovered villages and along the National Highways in Meghalaya at an estimated cost of Rupees 3911/- Crores.

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