

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3191

ANSWERED ON:29.11.2010

POOR CONNECTIVITY IN BORDER AREAS

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is inadequate connectivity in all the areas near the borders in the country including West Bengal;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard;
- (d) whether the Department of Telecom (DoT) had issued directives to Telecom Companies for providing services in connection with North Eastern States;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) to (c) Madam. More than 90% villages in Border States except Andman and Nicobar, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya have already been covered with telephone connectivity. The following two schemes are being carried out by BSNL with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in remaining uncovered revenue villages including those in the border areas of the country.

- (i) VPTs under Bharat Nirman
- (ii) Newly Identified VPTs

Further, a scheme has been launched by government under USOF to provide financial support for setting up and managing 965 number of infrastructure sites/towers in Border Districts for provision of mobile services in the border areas, where there was no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage. Villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage were taken into consideration for installation of the tower under this scheme. The infrastructure so created is being shared by three service providers for provision of mobile services. As on 31.10.2010, 862 towers i.e. about 89.32% have been set up under this scheme. All the mobile towers to be set up in Border Districts of West Bengal have already been set up in the scheme.

(d) to (f) The Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS)/Unified Access Service Licence (UASL) coverage condition inter-alia provides that licensee has to cover 10% District Head Quarters (DHQ)/Towns within one year from the date of startup spectrum allocation excluding average Standing Advisory Committee for Frequency Allocation (SACFA) delay and 50% DHQ/Towns within three year from the date of startup spectrum allocation. The choice of District Headquarters/towns to be covered beyond 50% District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on their business decision. There is no requirement of mandatory coverage of rural areas.

However, following schemes has been launched by government under USOF for provision of telecom services in the country including North East States.

- (i) VPTs under Bharat Nirman
- (ii) Newly Identified VPTs
- (iii) Replacement of Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) VPTs
- (iv) First Phase of Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme
- (v) Wire line Broadband Connectivity for rural areas