

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:5
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2014
MOBILE SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS
Dubey Shri Nishikant

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of deficient services, including poor connectivity of mobile network of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in rural areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor, State/UT-wise including Jharkhand;
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve mobile connectivity in rural areas;
- (d) the details of funds allocated and utilised for the purchase of diesel used for running Diesel Generator Sets installed as a power backup; and
- (e) whether the subsidized diesel is reportedly being pilfered/diverted and if so, the details thereof and the corrective action taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 5 FOR 7TH JULY, 2014 REGARDING "MOBILE SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS"

(a) Yes, Madam, Government is conscious of the deficient services including poor connectivity of the mobile network of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in rural areas. Government is committed to improve the Quality of Service (QoS) of mobile services of BSNL by addressing problems in connectivity and service delivery.

(b) Quality of Service (QoS) parameters are prescribed by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). While BSNL meets the benchmark parameters in general, the services of BSNL are below the benchmark levels for certain parameters in certain areas. The deficiencies in QoS parameters are on account of network performance, customer service delivery, congestion, inadequate network coverage etc. Details for the quarter ending March, 2014 as provided by TRAI are at Annexure-I.

The major reasons for deficiencies in BSNL's services are inadequate investment in infrastructure expansion in recent years, legacy issues of manpower, lack of availability of electricity supply etc.

(c) Various schemes are being implemented by Government with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for expansion of telecom services in rural and remote areas of the country. Details of such schemes are as below:

7317 Mobile towers have been installed with the financial support of USOF under the Share Mobile Infrastructure Scheme in villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage.

Union Cabinet approved a proposal to install mobile towers at 2199 locations identified by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, which are affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE). Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has been nominated to execute the work. The revised project cost of Rs. 3567.58 crores has been recommended for approval by the Telecom Commission in its meeting on 13.06.2014

Telecom Commission has, in its meeting held on 13.06.2014, approved a proposal to implement comprehensive telecom development Plan for North Eastern Region (NER) at an estimated project cost of Rs. 5336.18 Crores.

BSNL is actively engaged in preparing a revival plan for improvement in quality of services, addressing legacy issues and expansion of network coverage. BSNL is expanding its network through installation of 8784 Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) for 2G and 3G services in rural areas as part of its Phase-VII expansion plan at cost of Rs.1704 crores.

(d) The total funds allocated and utilised by BSNL in all its circles for the financial year 2013-14 for running Diesel Generator Sets installed as power back-up are Rs. 673.89 crores and Rs. 485.04 crores respectively.

(e) BSNL is alert to complaints of pilferage of diesel. BSNL has informed that while there are no registered complaints of pilferage of diesel at present, any complaint received is inquired into and appropriate action taken.