

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:122

ANSWERED ON:29.07.2015

Mobile Towers

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

- (a) the number of mobile towers installed by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) in the country, State/circle and TSP-wise;
- (b) whether instructions/guidelines have been issued for reinforcement of infrastructure and installation of more mobile towers so as to ensure better connectivity/services and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government plans to accord top priority for setting up of mobile towers in rural, tribal, backward and hilly areas and if so, the details of comprehensive plan prepared for the purpose along with the new mobile towers proposed to be installed in the current Five Year Plan, State-wise;
- (d) whether suggestions have been received from various quarters to set up mobile towers, through a transparent bidding process on Government property/ land in view of restrictions imposed on telecom companies and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken by the Government to improve the mobile network and signal quality along with the funds sanctioned for the purpose?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(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.122 FOR 29th July, 2015 REGARDING "MOBILE TOWERS".

(a) Madam, Number of mobile Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) setup at mobile towers in the country, Telecom Service Providers (TSP) wise, as on 31.05.2015, is provided as Annexure-A. The telecom licenses are issued Licensed Service Area (LSA) wise and accordingly the information about number of mobile BTSs setup at mobile towers is maintained LSA-wise and provided as Annexure-B.

(b) BTSs are established by the Telecom Service Providers at suitable locations, as per their Radio Frequency (RF) network planning for proper coverage of the area and as per their service requirement to fulfil the license conditions. Apart from taking siting clearances from Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) Wing of Department of Telecommunications (DoT), before installation of mobile towers, TSPs are also required to obtain necessary clearances from concerned local authorities such as municipal corporation, Gram Panchayat etc.

To facilitate installation of mobile towers Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued broad guidelines dated 01.08.2013 for issue of clearances for installation of Mobile Towers to all the State Governments/ Union Territories vide which State Government/ Local bodies have been, inter-alia, advised to provide single window clearance, electricity connection to the BTS site on priority and to extend all the benefits as applicable to infrastructure industry for setting up of mobile towers.

(c) Yes, it is Government's endeavour to provide satisfactory telecom services in all parts of the country including rural, tribal, backward & hilly areas. Various schemes are being implemented/ planned with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to expand mobile services in these areas. Details of some of these plans are as follows:

(i) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region: Government approved a proposal on 10.09.2014 to implement a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER), at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 5336.18 crore. The Project envisages provision of mobile coverage to 8621 identified uncovered villages by installing 6673 mobile towers, installation of 321 mobile towers along National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. State-wise list of mobile towers proposed for NER is provided at Annexure-C

(ii) Scheme for Mobile Communication Services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected Areas : Government, on 20.08.2014, approved a project to provide Mobile Services in 2199 locations in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 3567.58 crore. The project consists of installation of 1836 new towers in addition to commissioning of 363 existing towers of BSNL. State-wise breakup of LWE locations is provided at Annexure-D

Contdâ€³3/-

(iii) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands: Telecom Commission has given 'in principle' approval on 07.11.2014 for Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan including provision of mobile connectivity for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands with the total estimated investment of Rs. 221.05 crores.

(iv) Mobile coverage to remaining uncovered villages, which presently do not have mobile connectivity, is to be provided in a phased manner over five years.

(d) Yes, suggestions have been received from various associations of Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) which include Association of Unified Telecom Service Providers of India (AUSPI), Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA) requesting to facilitate the installation of mobile towers on Government Buildings and PSUs for expeditious rollout of telecom infrastructure.

(e) The measures taken by the Government and the funds sanctioned to improve the mobile network have been detailed in part (c) above. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997 empowers TRAI to lay down standards of quality of service to be provided by TSPs and ensuring quality of service. For ensuring quality of service, TRAI has been closely monitoring the performance of service providers against the quality of service benchmarks through Performance Monitoring Reports. Further, TRAI has engaged independent agencies for auditing and assessing quality of service and surveys are being done regularly through independent agencies to assess the Customer Perception of Service. TRAI has also been imposing financial disincentive on service providers for failure to comply with the quality of service benchmarks.

However, the issue of call drops has remained a matter of serious concern and Government is of the opinion that the efforts of TRAI would need to be supplemented with action by the DoT. Accordingly, DoT has been periodically engaging with TSPs to improve their network performance so as to deliver better quality of telecom services. The rapid growth of data traffic in cities and the sharp growth in smart phones have led to congestion in the network. Through conduct of periodic auctions, DoT has made spectrum available for provision of telecommunication services. In the last auction in February 2015, 470 MHz of spectrum was put to auction of which 418 MHz was sold. At the same time, it is expected that the telecom service providers make adequate investment in telecom infrastructure to provide the expected quality of service. As an immediate action, DoT has asked the TSPs to undertake a special drive for radio frequency optimisation of their networks followed by periodic optimisation as per need. Telecom Enforcement, Research & Monitoring (TERM) cells of DoT have been asked to carry out a special audit of quality of service parameters, to assess the gravity of the problem which will help to plan remedial measures, in all metro and capital cities in the country.

Further, DoT has pro-actively engaged in allaying the apprehensions of adverse effect on health due to EMF radiations from the mobile towers. In the area of biological effects of non-ionizing radiation, World Health Organization (WHO) has said that approximately 25,000 articles have been published over the past 30 years. Based on in-depth review of the scientific literature, WHO has concluded that "current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields". Five High Courts in the country have given judgements whereby they have dismissed petitions, where the mobile tower installations were challenged on grounds of ill health effects of EMF radiations.-

Annexure-A

Number of mobile Base Transceiver Station (BTS) setup in the country
Telecom Service Providers (TSP)-wise

Sl. No. TSP Total BTSs as on 31.05.2015

1	AIRCEL/DISHNET	58169
2	AIRTEL/BHL	201804
3	BSNL	116856
4	ETISALAT/ALLIANZ	1366
5	IDEA/ABTL	143655
6	LOOP	129
7	MTNL	3341
8	QTL/HFCL	2240
9	RELIANCE	76502
10	RELIANCE JIO	37937
11	SPIICE TELECOM	2299
12	SSTL (MTS)	8235
13	TTSL/TTML	67401
14	UNINOR	24773
15	VIDEOCON	5202
16	VODAFONE	158444
	Grand Total	908353

Contdâ€¦5/-

Number of mobile Base Transceiver Station (BTS) setup in the country
License Service Area wise

Sl. No. License Service Area (LSA) Total BTSs as on 31.05.2015

1 ANDHRA PRADESH 73413
2 ASSAM 17558
3 BIHAR 48672
4 CHENNAI 27014
5 DELHI 43393
6 GUJARAT 57498
7 HARYANA 21934
8 HIMACHAL PRADESH 8212
9 JAMMU AND KASHMIR 12679
10 KARNATAKA 66292
11 KERALA 39172
12 KOLKATA 24508
13 MADHYA PRADESH 55557
14 MAHARASHTRA (EXCLUDING MUMBAI) 76700
15 MUMBAI 30960
16 NORTH EAST 10931
17 ODISHA 24134
18 PUNJAB 34431
19 RAJASTHAN 42682
20 TAMILNADU (EXCLUDING CHENNAI) 56352
21 UTTAR PRADESH (EAST) 56197
22 UTTAR PRADESH (WEST) 44871
23 WEST BENGAL (EXCLUDING KOLKATA) 35193
Total 908353
Annexure-C

State-wise List of Mobile Towers Proposed for NER

S.No. Name of the State No. of Villages proposed to be covered No. of towers proposed to be installed in villages No. of towers proposed to be installed on National Highways

1 Arunachal Pradesh 2,805 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 Tripura 2 2 7
8 Sikkim 23 19 1
Total 8621 6673 321

Annexure-D

State-wise breakup of Left Wing Extremism LWE locations

S.No. State No. of locations

1 Andhra Pradesh 54
2 Bihar 184
3 Chhattisgarh 497
4 Jharkhand 782
5 Maharashtra 60
6 Madhya Pradesh 22
7 Odisha 253
8 Telangana 173
9 Uttar Pradesh 78
10 West Bengal 96
Total 2,199
