

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1593
ANSWERED ON:04.03.2015
INFRASTRUCTURES DEFICIT IN NER
Ering Shri Ninong;Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao

Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is an infrastructure deficit in the North Eastern Region (NER) and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has studied the infrastructural requirements of the region and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the measures proposed to fulfil the infrastructural needs of the region and proposed timeline for execution?

Answer

The Minister of State (Independent Charge) in the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) to (c) The unique problem of isolation of the North Eastern Region from the rest of the country and the hilly terrain in most of the States have posed challenges to infrastructure development in the region, especially in the development of transport and communications sector. This also necessitates sense of urgency for enhancing allocation of funds and expeditious implementation and completion of infrastructure projects. In this regards, recent reviews by concerned line Ministries reveal that despite delays, there has been progress towards completion of the ongoing infrastructure projects in railways, roads, airways, inland waterways, power and in the telecom sectors.

Infrastructural requirements of the North Eastern Region in respect of connectivity have been assessed by the Government from time to time. The latest study on transport sector is the Report of National Transport Development Policy Committee titled India Transport report- Moving India to 2032 published in 2014. The Report has a dedicated Chapter on Transport Development in The North East. Previous studies on the subject of connectivity include a Perspective Transport plan for Development of the NER funded by North Eastern Council (NEC) and the World Bank, the Report of the Rohit Nandan Committee on Air Connectivity in the Country and developing Air Traffic in the NER and other Regions having lesser frequency, the Report on Air connectivity by the Airport Authority of India (AAI) conducted by the NEC to ascertain various logistics gaps in the Air Connectivity in the NER, and the Report - cum - Detailed Project Report for Transmission and Distribution (upto 33 KV) system in NE Region including Sikkim which was done in collaboration with the World Bank and NEC.

For development of roads in the North Eastern Region, the Union Budget 2014-15 has allocated Rs.200 crore for the N.E. Roads Corporation. To expedite road construction, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has set up a company named as "National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation limited" (NHIDCL) on 18th July 2014 for construction/upgradation/widening of National Highways in the regions that share international boundaries with neighbouring countries. The main emphasis of NHIDCL is for implementation of balance projects under SARDP-NE in NER. To improve road connectivity, development of the East - West Corridor from Silchar in Assam to Porbandar in Gujarat to a 4-lane road has been taken up under National Highways Development Project (NHDP). The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has formulated the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-East (SARDP-NE), for upgradation of 10141 km road stretches of National Highways and State Roads in the year 2005-06. Out of 10141 km of roads included under SARDP-NE, 6418 km has been approved by the Government for implementation under Phase 'A1 and the Arunachal Pradesh Package of Roads and Highways and balance 3723 km has been approved only for preparation of DPR under Phase 'B of SARDP-NE. For development of roads in the North Eastern Region, the Union Budget 2014-15 has allocated Rs.200 crore for the N.E. Roads Corporation. Further, review meetings and monitoring of projects are being done at highest level in the Government. However, to avoid cost and time overrun, Ministry has adopted Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode for award of new works so that works can be completed within the stipulated time and cost.

In case of railways, 11 National Projects have been taken up. Rail connectivity projects to State Capitals of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are in various stages of implementation. Gauge conversion work in New Jalpaiguri - Siliguri - New Bongaigaon project is under implementation. The Railways Budget 2014-15 announced an allocation of Rs.5116 crore, a 54 percent increase over previous year, for the 23 ongoing railway projects of which 11 are National Projects, it was also announced to take up Eco-Tourism and Education Tourism in North Eastern States. In this year, Meghalaya has been brought on the railway map for the first time and a direct train service from Arunachal Pradesh to New Delhi has been introduced.

The Government has fast-tracked the development of greenfield airports at Pakyong in Sikkim and Hologgi in Arunachal Pradesh. Upgradation of Guwahati Airport as Inter-Regional Hub with connectivity to all major airports of the country and upgradation of Agartala, Dibrugarh and Imphal as Intra-Regional Hubs with connectivity to all the State capitals in the region have been taken up. Further, to connect remote areas in the region, non-operational airports viz Along, Daparizo, Passighat, Tezu and Ziro in Arunachal

Pradesh, Rupsi in Assam and Kailashahar in Tripura have been taken up for development and operationalisation.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is developing and maintaining for shipping and navigation purpose, the Brahmaputra from Dhubri to Sadiya which has been declared as National Waterway no. 2. This waterway of North Eastern region is connected with Kolkata Port via Indo- Bangladesh Transit & Trade Protocol Route. IWAI is providing requisite infrastructure like navigable fairway, aids to navigation and pilotage etc. for smooth navigation

To improve telecommunication system in the region, the Government approved on 10th September, 2014, the Comprehensive Telecom Plan for North East Region at a cost of Rs. 5,336.18 crore. It includes provision of 2G mobile coverage in identified uncovered areas of NER, 2G seamless mobile coverage along the National Highways in NER and investment to ensure reliability of and redundancy in the transmission network at State capitals and district headquarters in NER. The plan would be funded from the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

In respect of development of hydro-electric potential of the region, 16 Hydro Projects (above 25 MW) aggregating to 5576 MW are in various stages of construction for the growth and development of NE Region including Sikkim. In case of thermal power generation, 4 projects with total installed capacity of about 1000 MW are under implementation, namely, Bongaigaon TPP (3 x 250 MW) in Assam by M/s. NTPC, Monarchak Gas Based Power Project (101 MW) in Tripura by NEEPCO, AGTP CC Extension Project (51 MW) at Agartala and Namrup CCGT (100 MW) in Assam by Assam Power Generation Corporation Ltd. (APGCL). In addition, 726 MW gas based Palatana Project in Tripura has been operationalised.

For improving transmission and distribution system in the North East the Government of India has given investment approval to two schemes, namely a comprehensive scheme for strengthening of transmission and distribution system in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim at a cost of Rs.4754.42 crore and the North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP) Tranche-I in Six states of NER (Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura) at a cost of Rs.5111.33 crores.