

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

**RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 253
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18TH MARCH, 2021**

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY IN HILLY AREAS

253 # SHRI ANIL BALUNI:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) the efforts being made by Government to improve mobile connectivity in International Border areas in the State of Uttarakhand, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that private operators as well as BSNL have been adopting a negligent approach towards installation of towers in hilly areas due to which the people are not getting good telecom connectivity; and
- (c) whether any initiatives are being taken by Government in this regard, and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, LAW & JUSTICE AND
ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)**

- (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF RAJYA SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) to (c) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 253 FOR 18TH MARCH, 2021 REGARDING “MOBILE CONNECTIVITY IN HILLY AREAS”.

(a) Mobile connectivity in international border areas in the State of Uttarakhand is being covered by Government and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) in phased manner. Under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), the Government is implementing “354 border area villages’ scheme”, to provide mobile connectivity to 28 villages of the international border areas in the State of Uttarakhand.

(b) The Government and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are providing mobile connectivity in every part of the country including hilly States/UTs. During last 3 years, the number of mobile towers in hilly States/UTs has increased from 31,674 to 49,804, which is a growth of 57.2%.

(c) Further, the Government has taken following initiatives under Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), to provide mobile connectivity in hilly areas in the country:

- (i) Scheme for providing mobile connectivity in 354 villages of uncovered border areas including Ladakh and Kargil Region, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and other priority areas;
- (ii) Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region (NER) to provide mobile coverage in uncovered villages and along with the National Highways which includes following schemes:
 - (a) CTDP for NER States of Assam (except 2 districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao), Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura for Installation of 2,004 mobile towers for provision of mobile services in 2,128 uncovered villages and mobile connectivity along National Highways;
 - (b) Scheme for installation of 889 towers for provisioning of mobile services in 1164 uncovered villages and along National Highways in the State of Meghalaya;
 - (c) Scheme for installation of 1,533 towers for provisioning of mobile services in 2,374 uncovered villages of Arunachal Pradesh and 2 Districts of Assam, i.e. Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao.
- (iii) Re-provisioning of Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPT) provided to Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), Army, Border Road Organisation (BRO) and other Agencies using VSAT connectivity under BharatNet Project. Out of total number of 1,272 VSATs to be provided, 1,164 sites have been operationalized as on 01.03.2021.
