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BSNL installs 2,199 mobile towers in naxal-hit areas

The project was conceived by the Home Ministry along with DOT to combat insurgency in the most-affected regions by the left wing extremists across ten states.

PTI | Aug 31, 2016, 03.10 PM IST

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NEW DELHI: State-run telecom firm BSNL has completed installation of 2,199 mobile towers in naxal-affected regions across 10 states, as part of efforts to strengthen security mechanism

to combat insurgency in those areas.

"We had time till December 2016 to complete the project but all the 2,199 solar powered mobile towers have been installed and they are operational. This project sets an example for excellent coordination between government and private agencies," BSNL Chairman and MD Anupam Shrivastava told PTI.

The project was conceived by the Home Ministry along with Department of Telecom (DOT) to combat insurgency in the

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most-affected regions by the left-wing extremists across ten states. It was first approved by the Cabinet in June 2013 after a maoist attack at Bastar, Chattisgarh in which 27 people, including senior Congress leaders, were killed.

It was again sent for the Cabinet approval due to change in cost structure and was cleared in August 2014.

The project was executed by BSNL with the help of domestic vendors Vihaan Networks Ltd (VNL) and HFCL.

"We have touched life of people in these area. Our channel partners have done tremendous job by taking up this challenging project," Shrivastava said.

There are 106 districts across 10 states which have been identified by the government as the naxal affected districts across states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

In the tender floated by BSNL for this project, bids were received by these two companies while big players operating in the segment stayed away from it.

"We take pride in accomplishing the daunting task of world's largest solar telecom tower installation in the most hostile terrain of the country, with practically no roads, power or security. Against such imposing challenges, 1,315 telecom network towers have been setup in a record time," VNL Chairman Rajiv Mehrotra said.

He said VNL, on its part, has accomplished connectivity in ten states, 90 districts, 12,700 villages with 39 lakh mobile connections. The total project cost was Rs 3,567.58 crore, which was funded by the DoT arm USOF.

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