

February 03, 2022

**Shri Syedain Abbasi, IAS**  
**Additional Chief Secretary**  
**Information Technology Department**  
**Government of Assam**  
**Guwahati**

**Subject:** **DIPA request for addressing issues and challenges faced by Telecom Industry in Assam due to non-implementation of Assam Telegraph Infrastructure policy -2018 and other operational issues.**

**Reference:** i. 2<sup>nd</sup> State Broadband meeting dated 03<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 under the chairmanship of Hon'ble CS-Assam.

ii. DIPA submission dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 regarding increase in theft cases at telecom towers in Assam (copy attached).

**Respected Sir,**

1. **DIPA (Digital Infrastructure Providers Association)** is an apex representative body of digital infrastructure providers in India. Our membership includes telecom infrastructure providers such as American Tower Co., Indus Towers, Summit Digital (earlier Reliance Jio Infratel), Tower Vision, Ascend Telecom, Sterlite Technologies, Space Tele Infra, Suyog Telematics, iBus networks, V-Con Telecom as well as energy solution companies like Applied Solar Technologies, Coslight.
2. We are writing to you with reference to the **2<sup>nd</sup> State Broadband Committee** meeting dated **03<sup>rd</sup> February 2022** during which DIPA has raised issues being faced by telecom industry in Assam. As desired by Hon'ble CS good office we hereby submitting our request for implementation of Assam RoW rules and addressing operational issues.
3. In this regard, we would like to bring to your kind attention that the **Information Technology Dept. Govt. of Assam has already notified Guidelines/Instructions & permissive sanction for laying optical fibre and installing mobile towers on private and government land and buildings-2018** vide Government Letter No.IT.55/2015/433 dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018 for alignment with the provisions contained in the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016.
4. Sir, we would like to bring to your kind attention despite various industry submissions and meetings with Government of Assam for implementing uniform RoW policy and streamlining the process of installing the telecom infrastructure across the state, the waiver of **annual user charges** for private land and buildings has not been done.
5. Assam being a key state in northeast region is being followed by other eastern region neighbouring states and thus the industry concerns in Assam Telegraph Infrastructure Policy is being carry forwarded to other adjacent states. This deficit/delays the vision of

Hon'ble Prime Minister for creation of Digital India vide expediting of creation of Smart Cities.

6. Sir, in recent times the cases of telecom infra theft has increase multiple folds in many districts of Assam. Miscreants are also sabotaging our telecom property in some cases. We had also made a submission to Hon'ble CS for his urgent interventional this regard (copy attached).
7. Necessary directions to be issued to **law enforcement agencies** like Police Department, District Magistrates across all the districts to ensure the **security of telecom towers** and to take action against the miscreants who are involved in theft (earlier submission copy attached).
8. Departmental wise **Nodal Officers** to be appointed to address issues related to Telecom rollout in the state.
9. **Deemed approval** provision to be adopted for the applications crossing 60 days of submission.
10. Company wise online EB bills to be provided on registered email id to avoid any delay /penalty. EB tariff to be charged at **industrial rates** to telecom towers.
11. **DLTC (District Level Telecom Committee)** meetings to be convened under the chairmanship of DC/DM on regular basis addressing pending Tower NoC and EB connections and other local level operational issues.
12. Establishing telecom infrastructure should be treated as a priority sector by the state Electricity Distribution Companies to expedite the electrification of towers.
13. Streamline guidelines for development of future street infrastructure to support small cells and ariel fibre cable (OFC). Availability of Electricity Poles for deploying ariel OFC and small cells (**also prescribed in amendment dt 21-10-21for IT rules 2016**).
14. Sir, you will appreciate that the telecom industry has stood the test of the time and has been supporting the Assam Government with all its might; especially, during floods/ rains and the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, Telecommunication is a public utility service and Govt. of India has recognized towers as a critical Infrastructure and lifeline installation and any disruption to the functioning of the tower will disrupt the communication network thereby severely impacting the Online education, Work-From Home, health services and various other utility services provided by the government for the benefit of the public at large across Assam. It is pertinent to mention here that the success of the much-awaited Smart City project largely depends upon the effective mobile tower network.
15. **In view of the above, we request your urgent support and kind intervention for addressing following issues:**
  - I. Direct all departments/authorities to implement Assam Telegraph Infrastructure Policy-2018 in true letter and spirit and adopt Single Window Clearance System (as provided by the state of Assam).
  - II. Industry suggestions to be considered for amendment in Assam Telegraph Policy 2018 for waiving off the annual user charges.

- III. Support from law enforcement agencies against increase in theft and sabotage cases.
- IV. Convening of District Level Telecom Committee Meetings on regular basis.
- V. Streamline existing guidelines for future and upcoming technologies like 5G.

**We look forward for your urgent personal intervention and support in the matter. We would also request for an urgent meeting with your good self to explain the matter in detail and seek your further guidance.**

Thanking you.

For **Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA)**



**Tilak Raj Dua**  
**Director General**  
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**Copy to:**

1. Dr Jishnu Barua, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam.
2. Smt. Ruby Sharma, Secretary IT, Government of Assam.
3. Shri Ashutosh Sharma, Sr DDG – DOT, LSA Assam, Government of India.