

## UPA introduces mobile governance ahead of 2014, aims to reach out to electorate in rural areas

Maneesh Pandey | [Mail Today](#) | New Delhi, March 3, 2013 | UPDATED 09:36 IST

With its e-governance plans making little headway, the [UPA government](#) has devised a new strategy to reach out to the electorate in remote areas.

It is switching to mobile governance (m-governance) in view of its larger penetration across the country. If the plan goes according to the script, this service will become fully operational by the end of this year, just ahead of the 2014 general election.

### SWITCHING TO M-GOVERNANCE

■ Framework for mobile governance notified in *The Gazette of India*, Feb 2012

■ Uniform/single long and short codes — 51969 and 166 — obtained for M-governance

■ All government websites to be made mobile-compliant

■ Huge potential to reach out to voters in rural areas through m-governance

■ Broadband penetration is 15.1 million while mobile reaches 906.6 million (36.9% in rural areas). Mobile phone subscription to grow to 1 billion by Dec 2013

The UPA government will offer information on all its services, doled out by various ministries and departments, on your mobile phone. All you have to do is dial uniform single long and short codes - 51969 and 166 - from any part of the country.

#### All prepared

The government has been planning [mobile](#) governance for a while now. Presentations have been made and some pilots have already been launched. "The ministry of infor-



mation technology is in the process of fine -tuning the mobile-enabled governance to ensure glitch-free service," said Rajiv Gauba, additional secretary, department of information technology.

The government is working out the technical modalities to use the uniform code 166 and make all department websites mobile compliant. The framework for mobile governance has been notified in The Gazette of India, February 2012. Under this system, a single short code, in this case 166, can be used to avail all non-emergency government services, making way for easy integration of departments through self-service.

The proposal suits the UPA's plan to make inroads into rural areas with its populist schemes, not to miss benefits of direct cash transfer and Bharat Nirman. "Besides, no huge upfront investment is required to initiate the plan, making the mobile route ideal for publicising government financial services, including micro credit, and benefits of

Aadhar-related benefits and electoral information ahead of the next general elections," the officer told Mail Today.

The ministry had initiated the new project - National Roll-out for Mobile Services Delivery Gateway (MSDG) - last November and is upgrading the services under it.

Among the key mobile-governance services available to the citizens are duplicate residence certificates and duplicate birth certificates in Uttar Pradesh's model e-districts. In Nagaland, the mobile -based governance is enabling locals to track official public services.

In Manipur, mobiles are being used for grievance redressal and also to get information about various public schemes such as Balika Samridhi Yojna, Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme. In rural Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, the helpline will help farmers seek experts' advice on farming techniques.

## Linking services

Farmers will receive SMS alerts on weather schedule for crops and prevailing prices of foodgrains in mandis. Mobile numbers of farmers are already registered with the agriculture department and efforts are being made to timely update the data.

Similar mobile -based public services are being worked out in Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Jammu and Kashmir," the officer said adding, "three services - two in Goa and one in Maharashtra - are already being integrated with new short code 166. The UIDAI has agreed to link its three services with code 166 and a similar arrangement is under way to integrate Bihar's Panchayati Raj department with the uniform code."

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