

Narendra Modi government keen to revive BSNL and MTNL

By Mohua Chatterjee, TNN | 26 May, 2015, 11.32AM IST

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NEW DELHI: A year in office, the [Modi government](#) is keen to revive state-owned enterprises [BSNL](#) and [MTNL](#), even as they face stiff competition from private players.

BSNL that operates across the country including in remote areas, had posted a profit of Rs 10, 000 crore when the [Atal Bihari Vajpayee government](#) left office in 2004, but "when we returned to government in 2014, it was suffering from a loss of Rs 7020 crore," [Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad](#) told TOI.

According to the minister, the case of [MTNL](#) is all the more curious. "It was in profit till 2008-2009, but in 2014, it had a debt of Rs 16,000 crore." MTNL operates in Delhi and Mumbai only. "Someone, somewhere will have to take responsibility and accountability as to which were the forces and patronised by whom, responsible for creating a mess," Prasad said adding that "revival of BSNL and MTNL are priority concerns".

BSNL was practically not allowed any expansion and six to seven crucial years were lost, the minister alleged, virtually pointing finger at the previous [UPA government](#).

According to ministry sources, each time a tender was called, there were efforts to stall it on one pretext or the other including court cases, security issues, or other 'lame excuses', to allow that time to private players.

Prasad said he plans to recover lost ground in the seventh phase of expansion for BSNL. To ensure good connectivity, 25,645 new base transmission centres (BTCs) will be in place in 2-3 years, of which nearly 15,000 have already been installed in the last one year.

As part of technology upgrade, wireless exchanges of BSNL will be replaced by Internet Protocol (IP) in 432 telephone exchanges and for 70 lakh telephone lines.

Similarly, MTNL is already upgrading 1080 3G sites in Delhi and Mumbai, and 825 2G sites in Delhi and 616 2G sites in Mumbai.

Apart from working on better connectivity, the ministry is working on putting the entire complaint redress system online to make it more effective and transparent.

With reports of BSNL doing a great job of restoring telephone connections after natural calamities struck, like the recent earthquake in Nepal or when Hud-Hud cyclone hit Andhra Pradesh or even when floods devastated the Kashmir Valley, the minister has told the telecom department that it should be able to live up to expectations in normal times.



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