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IMD teams up with BSNL to send weather warnings

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The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is teaming up with state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to send extreme weather warnings to people, a senior Ministry of Earth Sciences official said.

The move comes after the the IMD came under criticism from several quarters, including some State governments, for not sending out specific alerts, a charge denied by the weather body.

The IMD is trying to team up with BSNL to push the alerts to common people. BSNL has come up with a technology. If the IMD sends an alert, BSNL will pass it on to all BSNL numbers in Delhi, M Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, told PTI.

The area-specific alerts will be sent to users if they are in the place where an extreme weather event is expected, even if their phone numbers do not belong to that partic-

ular telecom circle.

The exercise is being carried out on an experimental stage, and if successful the plan is to rope in other weather agencies as well, the official said.

Rajeevan, however, said that government agencies have limitations in disseminating information, especially in scenarios like thunderstorms wherein the entire weather pattern forms and wreaks its fury in a short span of two-three hours.

More than 200 people died due to thunderstorms across the country this month, with Uttar Pradesh alone witnessing half the deaths.

In 2016, extreme weather had claimed 1,600 lives with heatwave topping the list.

The IMD cannot reach every individual. Its is to prepare the forecast. There should be some intermediary agencies which can take the forecast and pass it on to people, the official said.