

BSNL set to infuse new life into old fixed lines in most of TN

Sindhu Hariharan, TNN | Nov 18, 2014, 06:24AM IST

CHENNAI: Starting next year, BSNL will try to ring new life into its landline business with instruments that can support services like IPTV, e-commerce, tele-education, web portals, interactive games, multimedia content and call centre services. The new landlines that integrate features of smartphones will be rolled out in 22 sites in Tamil Nadu telecom circle (not including Chennai city) in the next couple of months.

Work is on to shift about 1.06 lakh landlines to the new system and installation and testing work is nearing completion. Chennai Telephones is also in the process of rolling out the service.

State-owned BSNL has nearly 27.52 million phones or 64% marketshare, but it is a category with a monthly decline rate of almost 0.6%. BSNL is bringing in next generation network (NGN) internet protocol multimedia subsystem infrastructure to integrate in-demand features of smartphones with landlines and revive ailing landline services.

"With increasing consumer preference for multimedia services, we decided to move to a packet-switching model from our earlier circuit-switching mode. This will result in convergence of fixed line and mobile. The operations are nearing final acceptance testing stage and we are hopeful it will be rolled out as early as the next quarter," said chief general manager of Tamil Nadu circle of BSNL, G V Reddy.

BSNL launched this nation-wide initiative to migrate from public switched telephone network (PSTN) to NGN almost three years ago and then decided on the partner vendors through a tender process. The NGN system will allow subscribers to enjoy support services such as IPTV, e-commerce and multimedia content through a computer terminal at their end.

This comes as a fresh lease of life for landlines, which seem set to enter the history books. Traditionally, besides voice call services, fixed lines provide some special services like call waiting (118), call transfer/call forward (114), automatic wake-up (116) and time announcement (174). The utilization of these services reduced gradually as mobile phones emerged. The NGN-IMS system will retain all these existing allied services.