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| पब्लिकेशन : | <i>The Pioneer</i> | पृष्ठ संख्या : | 8    |
| स्थान :     |                    | दिनांक :       | 14/9 |

## Ravi Shankar Prasad extends free BSNL services for a week to J&K

### Spectrum sharing & trading norms expected by year-end

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Extending support to the flood ravaged people of J&K the Communications and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has promised free telecom services for a week on BSNL network.

"People of flood affected J&K can now talk free for a week on BSNL's network in the flood affected areas. We have also requested private telecom operators. They have allowed 60 minutes of free talk time everyday," Prasad said while addressing a meet marking the completing of the first 100 days of in the ministry.

As per the Minister, out of the total 12,306 base transceiver stations (BTS) or mobile towers in J&K, 6,811 towers were submerged and that the government has restored 1,208. Also 8,000 landline connections in the Kashmir valley have started functioning and the government has set up five free public calling booths (PCOs) at the airport. On the status of the telecom networks in the valley, Prasad said that except in Poonch, mobile services are either substantially or partially restored in all parts of the valley.

Even as private operators as Airtel and Vodafone had gone



Minister for Communications & Information Technology and Law & Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad briefing the media on the new initiatives and achievements of the Ministries", in New Delhi on Saturday. The Secretary, Dely, R S Sharma and the Director General (M&C), Press Information Bureau, AP Frank Noronha are also seen.

on a restoration of the network in the valley in a big way, BSNL said it had restored 92 mobile towers, which were affected by floods. Overall 473 towers are working in the Valley whereas 934 is the number for the whole state.

Prasad has also indicated that the guidelines for telecom spectrum trading and sharing would be ready and would be in place by the end of the year. "Guidelines will be in place by end of year on spectrum trading and sharing," Prasad said.

TRAI in July had recommended allowing sharing of all categories of radiowaves held by operators including those allo-

cated at the old price of Rs 1,658 crore or assigned without auction, a move that could help companies significantly reduce cost of providing mobile services and also enable reforming of spectrum bands lying idle and unused with various operators.

TRAI had suggested that all access spectrum above the bands of 800 MHz will be sharable provided that both licensees are have spectrum in the same band.

Operators are allowed to share passive infrastructure like mobile towers, which has helped them in reducing operational cost but not active infrastructure like spectrum.

## ₹800-crore centre to help people check malware in computers

NEW DELHI: Amid growing use of IT, the Government on Saturday said it will step up cyber security measures under Digital India programme starting with a Rs 800 crore centre that will help people check and clean their computer system from viruses and other malwares.

"We are going to make national cyber coordination centre at an estimated cost of Rs 800 crore. For this we are carrying out inter-ministerial consultation... It will have capability to tell you that your computer system is infected and will clean that infection as well," Telecom and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a conference on 100-days performance of his ministry.

The project has to be approved by the Cabinet. Besides this, the Government will set up an e-governance security centre at a cost of Rs 270 crore for ensuring security of all e-governance initiatives which has witnessed crores of transactions.

Highlighting the importance of the programme, Prasad said funds will not be a problem for Digital India - the umbrella programme designed by NDA government.

"Digital India is an umbrella programme with an outlay of Rs 1.13 lakh crore and Prime Minister declared it as a national programme on August 15 and Cabinet has also approved it, money shall not be a problem as far as the success of Digital India programme is concerned," Prasad said.

The programme was conceptualised in a span of less than three months and consequently endorsed by the Union Cabinet on August 20.

The programme includes projects that aim to ensure that government services are available to citizens electronically and people get benefit of the latest information and communication technology.

Prasad said the government is working on national optical fibre network (NOFN) which will be completed by 2017 to provide broadband services in all 2.5 lakh panchayats at an estimated cost of Rs 20,000 crore.