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Prasad plans to make 8 cities electronic hubs

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Telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Tuesday that government is prioritising resolution of tax disputes with MNCs including Vodafone and Nokia and boost manufacturing of electronics in the country by giving financial incentives.

"Lot of those cases pertain to issue of taxation. I am given to understand that the department of finance is already looking into the matter. We are fully willing to co-operate with the finance ministry in early redressal of these grievances," said Mr Prasad on legal disputes with foreign companies.

He said that the BJP led NDA government has been clear in the Presidential address and also in party's manifesto "we want stable fiscal regime." "The government has been repeatedly sharing its concern that retrospective taxation is something which needs to be avoided," said Mr Prasad.

On a recent report by Vodafone, which said India is among 29 countries that sought access to its network to intercept calls, SMSes and e-mails, the minister said he has asked the telecom

PRASAD'S SETS HIS TO DO LIST

● Resolution of tax disputes with MNCs including Vodafone and Nokia.

● Plans to revive BSNL and MTNL.

● Establishment of postal Banking that would be designed for financial inclusion and is in talks with the RBI.

● Boosting electronic manufacturing.



department to look into it and work with its representative for early redressal of the matter.

He said that the new government is keen to revive BSNL and MTNL. "We are pained that both these organisations didn't get adequate attention in the last few years. They need proper infrastructure support and my government is committed to give them that," said Mr Prasad.

The minister said that his ministry is working to establish Postal Banking that would be designed for financial inclusion and is in talks with the RBI.

The minister said that the other area of priority will be boosting electronic manufacturing in the country because if things continue as they are in next few years "import bill of electronic goods is going to surpass the fuel bill." He

said that this sector has the potential to give employment to 28 million persons.

An Electronic Development Fund to encourage innovation in this sector will be set up. Mr Prasad said that around 2.5 lakh village panchayats in the country would be provided broadband connectivity within a period of three years. The ministry has identified eight new areas for Modified Special Incentive Scheme. This area includes Ghaziabad (UP), Vadodara and Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Nagpur, Nasik, Aurangabad and Thane (Maharashtra). The ministry has also taken up development of green field electronic manufacturing clusters in Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Maheshwaram, Bhiwadi, Jabalpur, Hosur and Kakhanada.