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Performance of BSNL and MTNL to be monitored closely for their revival, 2,50,000 Village Panchayats to be provided Broadband connectivity within three years and developing India into global Electronic manufacturing hub to be the key area of priority for Ministry of Communications & IT.

Union Minister for Communications & IT, Law & Justice, Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that the moral of the Department was not in happy situation because of this being in news for wrong reasons in the past. It was clearly conveyed by Shri Prasad that now decision will be taken on merits and days of lobbying are over. He appealed to all officers to open up and learn to take decisions to ensure growth in the most important sector of Indian economy. He emphasized that improvement of BSNL and MTNL both in terms of performance and infrastructure would be an important area of this priority. He would be playing a pro-active role in monitoring functioning of the two bodies. For this he has directed for installation of suitable equipments in his chamber. If the Base Transmission Station in a particular circle are not functioning in a satisfactory manner then serious view will be taken.

He further stated that around 2,50,000 village panchayats in the country would be provided broadband connectivity within a period of three years. Interacting with the media in Sanchar Bhawan in the Capital today, the Minister said that there was a target of covering at least 50,000 gram panchayats within this financial year and 1,00,000 village panchayats each in the years 2015-16 and 2016-17. He said that improvement of performance of BSNL and MTNL was a key area of concern for his Ministry and his objective was to improve the services of these organizations for better consumer satisfaction.

The Government was committed to improving the telecom network in the North-Eastern region and around 8,000 mobile towers shall be set up at an approximate cost of Rs.5,000 crores. Mr. Prasad informed that in principle approval has been given for a nation-wide Mobile Network Portability (MNP) and its implementation would begin after TRAI submits its recommendations.

Briefing reporters about the priorities for the Department of Electronics and IT under his Ministry, the Minister said that electronic manufacturing shall be a key area of priority. This sector has the potential to give employment to 28 million persons. The Ministry has identified 8 new areas for Modified Special Incentive Subsidy Scheme. This area includes Ghaziabad(UP), Vadodra & Gandhinagar(Gujarat), Nagpur, Nasik, Aurangabad & 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. Mr. Prasad also said that he was in the process of working out a transparent arrangement for the Spectrum related issues keeping in view the twin objectives of consumer welfare and the country's growth in the field of mobile telephony.

Spelling out the priorities for Department of Posts under his Ministry, Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad said his Ministry was working to establish Postal Banking that would be designed for financial inclusion. The total saving deposits across 1,55,000 post offices in the country was already more than 6 lakh crores.

Later, responding to queries by the reporters, Mr. Prasad said that tentative expenditure for the broadband connectivity project was around Rs. 20,000 crores. BSNL Power Grid Corporation and Railtel were already working on three pilot projects which would then be expanded to entire country in a phase-wise manner.

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