

BSNL to appoint private recovery agents to recover dues

17 Apr, 2008, 1602 hrs IST, PTI

NEW DELHI: Saddled with huge losses of over Rs 5,400 crore, state-owned telecom firm BSNL has asked its state units to appoint Private Recovery agents on commission basis to assist in recovery of dues, mostly from customers.

Besides this, circles have also been asked to utilise the services of state government departments in recovery of outstanding dues, Communication and IT Minister A Raja said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

"The total outstanding dues of BSNL against subscribers and private operators as on January 31, 2008 are Rs 5,488.04 crore," the minister said.

The outstanding dues have been created on account of the fact, that many customers do not pay the bills on time, change their premises and after defaulting, move to other new operators without paying their dues.

Instructions have been issued to circles to ensure timely issue of telephone bills and to effect disconnection of telephones for non-payment promptly. The company has fixed a 35-day deadline for disconnection due to non-payment of bills, the reply said.

Hitherto, banks and credit card companies were among the chief patrons of recovery agents, whose more often than not high-handed methods of recovering dues came for flak from the Reserve Bank of India last year.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT and Communication had also expressed concern over BSNL's functioning as it was losing nearly eight per cent of its market share to private operators due to delays in adding GSM capacity last year.

With regard to arrears from private operators, the minister said that instructions are issued to all service providers from time to time to make payments