

Tata, Rcom to pay Rs 700cr to BSNL

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has held Tata Teleservices 'Walky' and Reliance Communication's (formerly Infocom) 'Unlimited Cordless' as limited mobile phones, hence they are liable to pay Access Deficit Charge (ADC) to BSNL for interconnection.

A bench headed by Justice H S Kapadia, while dismissing Tata Teleservices and Reliance Communication's petitions, has upheld telecom tribunal TDSAT's order of September 2005 that held these services are not fixed lines telephones, but limited mobile.

The Supreme Court had earlier reserved its judgement on a petition filed by Tata Teleservices challenging the telecom tribunal's order which classified the company's fixed wireless phone service 'Walky' as limited mobile.

With this, the apex court had also reserved Reliance Communication's plea challenging Telecom Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal's (TDSAT) order which held that its fixed wireless telephone was equivalent to mobile service and thus Reliance was liable to pay ADC of over Rs 400 crore.

The tribunal in September 2005 had rejected the Tata Teleservices's petition and held that 'Walky' was actually a WLL (M) service, with limited mobility, and not a fixed telephone service, contrary to the licence granted to the company.

TDSAT had ruled that 'Walky' service offered by Tatas was a mobile service, thus the private company was liable to pay ADC to state-owned BSNL as per the interconnect order of telecom regulator TRAI. Thus, Tata would have to pay about Rs 300 crore as levy to BSNL on account of ADC.