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MORE USERS JOINING NETWORK THAN LEAVING, PRASAD

BSNL 'number portability' positive so far in FY20

NEW DELHI: State-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has said that the number of customers moving into its network is higher than those leaving it, making its mobile number portability (MNP) positive during 2019-20 so far, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

The number of port-ins stood at 53.64 lakh, against 28.27 lakh port outs in 2018-19, and thereafter the numbers cumulative up to October 2019 was 2.04 crore (port-ins) against 1.80 crore (port-outs).

"BSNL has informed that number of customers ported in to BSNL is higher than the ported-out customer of BSNL. BSNL's MNP is positive during 2019-20 (till October, 2019)," Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

The number of mobile connections of BSNL stood at 11.64 crore as on August 31.

In a separate reply, the minister said that with the Cabinet approving the revival plan for BSNL and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) last month, it is expected that both the companies will turn around in future.

To another question on whether the government has any plan of going for any disinvestment of these telecom



companies in near future, the minister said, "At present, there is no proposal for disinvestment of BSNL and MTNL."

The Cabinet on October 23 had approved the revival plan for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) which includes in-principle approval for merger of both the companies.

Since MTNL is operating in metros of Delhi and Mumbai and BSNL operates in the rest of India, it is expected that the merger will help in pan-India footprint and synergy in operations.

The revival plan approved by the Cabinet also includes measures to reduce staff cost through a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) for employees of age 50 years and above, administrative allotment of spectrum

for 4G services, debt restructuring by raising of sovereign guarantee bonds and monetisation of their assets.

The telecom corporation has also decided to implement various austerity measures which include reducing expenditure for different outsourcing works, in view of its poor financial position.

"However, due to severe financial constraints, delay in payment to contractors by BSNL/MTNL has occurred in recent months. All efforts are being made by BSNL and MTNL to overcome the situation to meet the immediate necessary expenditure including payment of bills of contractors for making payment of wages/arrears to contract casual workers," Prasad said in another reply. BSNL has been reporting losses since 2010. P11