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No health threat from mobile radiation: Ravi Shankar

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PATNA Dismissing common perception about threat to health due to mobile tower radiation, Union communication and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday said he had asked all state governments to let their official premises be used for installation of towers for enhanced connectivity.

Inaugurating new facilities of the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) here, Prasad said his assessment of "no threat" from mobile radiation was based on the findings of World Health Organisation (WHO), which had conducted about 30,000 studies. "The result of the studies, which came out only last year, does not find any dangerous impact on life," he said.

"Why is so much hue and cry made over health threat from mobile towers? Have you ever heard of such protest against mobile radiation in other countries? Many courts of laws have already given orders against



Union communication and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad at a function in Patna on Sunday. SANTOSH KUMAR/HT PHOTO

THE UNION MINISTER LAUNCHED NG TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, VIDEO-SANGOSTHI AND MOBILE EXPANSION PLANS OF BSNL IN BIHAR

those opposing towers in residential areas" the minister said. Prasad also inaugurated a new generation telephone

exchange equipped to enable all facilities available with mobile phones, including video call on landlines, multi-point video

conferencing, and expansion of mobile network in the state.

Asserting that voice calls should not be ignored in crave for data services, the minister called upon BSNL and other private operators to strengthen their system and optimise resources to do away with network congestion and resultant call drops. "The Centre has brought in a policy for resource sharing among operators. While BSNL is strengthening its network, private operators should also install advance network," said Prasad.

Maintaining that presence of BSNL in telecom is a must for healthy competition in communication sector, the Union minister said his ministry was committed to its objective of making the state owned telecom operator a profit making entity. He also wondered as to why did the previous government let BSNL, equipped with huge resources, become an alling organisation.

Outlining his objective to carry forward benefits of the digital India mission to rural

areas, Prasad called upon Bihar chief minister to rise above politics for development of the state and help the Central government open software technology park (STPI) on engineering college campus at Muzaffarpur. "Then chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi had approved the proposal, but Nishith government is refusing it," he said.

BSNL chairman and managing director Anupam Srivastava said the recent initiatives undertaken by the company had resulted in regaining cellular subscribers' base. Popularity of landlines is also increasing due to introduction of freebies and new features. BSNL has earmarked a sum of ₹5,000 crore for network expansion in the coming years, said Srivastava.

Leader of opposition in the assembly Nand Kishore Yadav, chief general manager of Bihar BSNL SL Singh and principal general manager, Patna telephones, SS Choudhary also spoke. Chief post master general of Bihar AS Prasad and many senior officers of BSNL were present on the occasion.