

Private firms to share India telecom grid

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Private telecom companies are now able to share the infrastructure set up in rural India by state-run BSNL, a top government official said Wednesday.

Telecom Minister Dayanidhi Maran told members of Parliament's Lok Sabha (House of the People) that granting private firms access to infrastructure built by BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.) would spur the growth of mobile services in rural areas of the country.

"There has been huge demand for BSNL services leading to shortage of infrastructure," Maran said, according to Press Trust India.

Maran said he expected most Indian communities to have some mobile access by 2007. The government hopes to have 250 million phone connections in place by that time, with BSNL alone adding more than 14 million lines as well as a plethora of base stations during the current fiscal year.

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