

## BSNL 3G service to cover all northeast urban areas by March

The state-owned telecom operator Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) will cover all urban areas in the northeastern region through its third generation (3G) platform, a next generation mobile communications systems, company officials have said.

'For rural areas, WiMAX and WLL EVDO (wireless broadband services) would be introduced very shortly, these services are also more or less similar to 3G,' said BSNL general manager of operations Deb Kumar Chakraborty.

He was addressing reporters in Agartala during the launch of a set of 3G standards defined by the International Telecommunication Union in Tripura and Meghalaya simultaneously Saturday evening.

'BSNL has planned to cover 751 cities by the 3G services by March. The next generation mobile communications systems so far have been launched in 113 cities, including Guwahati and Gangtok,' Chakraborty said.

BSNL, the world's seventh largest telecom operator, is the first company along with the other state-owned operator, Mahanagar Telecom Nigam Ltd (MTNL), to launch 3G services in India.

'3G services are not merely targeted at the elite class, but everyone. The tariff is affordable. Subscribers can make a local video call at Rs 1.50 per minute and long distance video call at Rs 2.50 per minute. Data access rate is only 1 paisa per 10 kilobyte,' Chakraborty added.

Addressing reporters in Shillong, BSNL chief general manager Vinod Kumar said the 3G mobile services would be provided for both postpaid and prepaid categories.

'3G telephony would help enhance efficiency in e-governance and competitiveness in the information technology and BPO segments,' Kumar said.

Tripura Industries and Commerce Minister Jitendra Chowdhury said at the 3G launch in Agartala that the service would facilitate economic growth and help the government to provide better services to the people.

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