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NEW DELHI: Ailing state-run telecom companies Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) are yet to recover Rs 6,444 crore as dues from subscribers for non-payment of bills.



For BSNL, which operates all over the country, barring Delhi and Mumbai, the amount is Rs 5,341 crore, while MTNL which offers services in Delhi and Mumbai, has to recover Rs 1,103 crore from the subscribers as on March 31, 2011, according to official sources.

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"The amount realised by BSNL and MTNL from its customers during the year 2010-11 against the outstanding bills of previous years and bills issued during the year are Rs 12,587 crore and Rs 863 crore, respectively," Minister of State for Telecom and IT Milind Deora said recently.

BSNL's losses for 2010-11 stood at Rs 6,000 crore, while MTNL incurred losses of about Rs 2,800 crore.

In order to recover the outstanding money two PSUs are taking several measures including payment reminders through Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and Short Message Service (SMS), graded discount schemes and incentive schemes to employees of BSNL for recovery of outstanding arrears from defaulters.

In February, MTNL had floated a notice inviting applications for recovering the arrears. Recovery agents or firms will be paid commission on the basis of the amount recovered. The contract was for a year and might be extended to two years. The selected bidders would have to recover a fixed minimum amount of Rs 1 lakh a month, the application had said.

BSNL and MTNL have been losing revenues and market share steadily amid an intense price war in the telecom industry. MTNL has also been impacted by high payouts for pension and other retirement benefits, while a major chunk of BSNL's revenues goes towards paying the salary for staff.

The two PSUs are also in the process of introducing a voluntary retirement scheme to lay off surplus employees. BSNL has an employee base of about 280,000, while MTNL has 45,000.

Till the end of October 31, MTNL has a GSM subscriber base of about 5.61 million in Delhi and Mumbai. BSNL's GSM subscriber base in the same period stands at 96.19 million.