

## **BSNL becomes lifeline of Kashmir; first network to start functioning during the flood**

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A friend in need is friend indeed. The government-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has proved to be the true friend of the people of Kashmir. In one of the worst floods that the valley has seen, BSNL was the first network to start functioning.

Private networks like Airtel, Vodafone and Idea were also trying to resume their operations as the news appeared that the weather conditions had improved in the valley. However, it was more of a PR exercise rather than the solid work on the ground.

BSNL's case was different. It worked on war footing. It was able to provide basic communication facility to the people of Kashmir and in a large part of the Valley. The network was partially available on Sunday. "Next one week will be difficult as the level of water is very high," said a BSNL official. "We will ensure that the quality of services improve in coming days."



Both BSNL officials and the Army worked together.

One good initiative by Vodafone, Idea and Airtel is that they are providing additional talk-time credit to all the customers to ensure low balance doesn't prevent them from making emergency calls.

Hughes Communications India, the largest VSAT service provider in India, said that 39% of its KU band VSAT sites and 44% of its XC band VSAT sites are hit by the Kashmir floods.

"Hughes is diagnosing all its J&K VSAT sites which got affected last week because of

the floods. Immediate corrective actions are being taken," said Shivaji Chatterjee, head of enterprise business, Hughes Communications India.

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