

BSNL, Sai Info Launch Video-phone Facility

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Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in association with Ahmedabad-based Sai Info System on Monday launched video-phone facility using a specialised fixed line telephone, for the first time in country. BSNL expects to have over 1 million subscribers in two years.

"We see the industry and business sector to use this service in the initial phase. We are also studying how we can use the public telephone booth model in this segment," S Bhargava, chief general manager of

BSNL, told mediapersons in Ahmedabad on Monday.

Company officials feel that the service has the potential for tele-education and tele-medicine especially in rural areas. The service requires a specialised fixed line device and broadband connection at terminals. The inaugural call was made by Sam Pitroda in New Delhi to BSNL officials in the city. Voice calls within the country will be charged at 40 paise per minute while international voice calls will be charged at ₹1.20 per minute. The video and voice calls will be charged 2 per minute. The service will be launched

gradually first in western and northern states and later on in southern and eastern states.

Ahmedabad Sai Info Systems has prepared specialised instruments in the price range of 15,000- 35,000 for the service. "Since the service is launched, we expect more companies to produce the instrument. Competition will bring the cost of instruments down," Bhargava said. SIS has a capacity to produce 30,000 phones per month at Parvato in Himachal Pradesh. It has invested 200 crore for the project, informed Rajeev Gupta, senior vice-president of SIS.