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DoT to waive BSNL's Rs 102 crore charges

May 8, 2014



The government's efforts to revive financially stressed Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) continues.

KOLKATA: The government's efforts to revive financially stressed Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) continues. The telecom department will shortly waive nearly Rs 102 crore of microwave royalty and satellite spectrum charges payable annually by BSNL, according to an internal note.

At present, BSNL pays Rs 96 crore annually as royalty to DoT's wireless planning cell for microwave-based connectivity across the seven north-eastern states.

In addition, it pays nearly Rs 6 crore as satellite spectrum charges to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for satellite-based coverage in the remote border districts of the North East, Ladhakh and the Andaman and Lakshdweep archipelagos.

The telecom department has asked the Wireless Planning & Coordination (WPC) wing to "exempt BSNL from payment of both royalty charges for point-to-point microwave links and satellite spectrum levies" with immediate effect, the note shows. The moves are aimed at incentivising BSNL to step up telecom penetration in these regions, especially after Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) recently recommended a comprehensive expansion of landline and mobile coverage in the Northeast.

These will be in addition to the government support that loss-making BSNL has received for paying staff salary. An empowered interministerial group had recently asked DoT to give concessional loans to the

state-run telco to help it pay a portion of its staff salary bill, which is likely to touch Rs 14,000 crore in 2013-14.

A top BSNL official said the "royalty waiver had been sought" as the company is compelled as part of its social obligation to go for expensive microwave links to provide both landline and mobile coverage in these hilly regions, which are ill suited to optic-fibre connectivity".

The latest sops come at a time differences have arisen between the telecom department and Planning Commission over waiving satellite bandwidth charges to BSNL.

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BSNL announced two New Combo Unlimited Broadband Plans at Rs 1445 and Rs 2345

May 8, 2014

BSNL today announced two new combo unlimited broadband plans for all landline customers across the country and both plans will be available from May 10, 2014 as promotional basis for just 90 days.

BSNL has named these two broadband plans as "BBG Combo ULD 1445" and "BBG Combo ULD 2799" but while going through the details, FMCs for both plans are set as Rs 1445 and Rs 2345 respectively. I think BSNL has mistakenly named "BBG Combo ULD 2799" in place of "BBG Combo ULD 2345".

Two new Combo Unlimited Broadband Plans



Particulars		BBG Combo ULD 1445	BBG Combo ULD 2799
Bandwidth (Download Speed)		upto 2 Mbps till 20 GB, 1 Mbps beyond	upto 4 Mbps till 30 GB, 2 Mbps beyond
Applicability		All Users	All Users
Monthly Charges (Rs)		1445	2345
Download/Upload Limit (MB/ GB) per month		Unlimited	Unlimited
Telephone fixed monthly charges in Rs		NIL	NIL
Free Calls (within BSNL N/W only)		250	250
MCU charges/ pulse in Rs.	(To BSNL N/W after free calls)	1	1
	(To other N/W)	1.2	1.2

The details of both plans shows that "BBG Combo ULD 1445" will offer download **speed upto 2Mbps till 20GB and thereafter customer will experience reduced speed of 1Mbps.**

BSNL is already offering "BBG Combo ULD 1445" with download speed upto 4Mbps till 20GB and 512Kbps thereafter but in new promotional plan, it has reduced download speed from 4Mbps to 2Mbps and increased speed FUP from 512Kbps to 1Mbps.

The broadband plan "BBG Combo ULD 2799" will offer **download speed of 4Mbps till 30GB and thereafter speed will be reduced to 2Mbps as per FUP.**

BSNL has also clubbed 250 free calls to be made within its own network with these both plans.

@@@@@@@@@@@@. BSNL chief RK Upadhyay likely to get two-month extension

9 May, 2014

Bharat Sanchar Nigam's chairman and managing director RK Upadhyay is likely to get an extension of just two months, till June 30 to oversee the conclusion of the loss-making public sector telecom operator's revival plans.

KOLKATA: Bharat Sanchar Nigam's chairman and managing [director RK Upadhyay](#) is likely to get an extension of just two months, till June 30 to oversee the conclusion of the loss-making public sector telecom operator's revival plans. The decision marks an end to the recent face-off between communications minister [Kapil Sibal](#) and the department of telecom (DoT) over handling of leadership succession at the national telecom carrier.

Sibal had recently rebuked the DoT for recommending BSNL's director (consumer mobility) [Anupam Shrivastava](#) as the future CMD without considering a three-year extension for Upadhyay based on a neutral appraisal by an external expert group. Upadhyay's three-year tenure ended on April 30.

As per the rules, the CMD's tenure will be for "three years in the first instance, or till the date of superannuation and can be extended by another three years based on performance evaluation by an external expert group".

The telecom department has not recommended a three-year extension for Upadhyay, though, and has sought Sibal's approval for extending his tenure only till June 30, which is also his superannuation date, according to an internal departmental note seen by ET.

This is despite Sibal rating Upadhyay "an excellent officer" and [telecom](#)

[secretary](#) Farooqui also maintaining that "Upadhyay had steered BSNL through turbulent times, during which the state-run telco's [market share](#) had increased marginally".

Upadhyay could not be reached for comments. He had recently said that reducing BSNL's huge staff salary bill and viability gap funding for commercially non-viable ventures was essential for the company's survival.

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TCIL to name consultant for Bharti Hexacom exit; eyes 25% rev growth

8 May, 2014



Bharti Hexacom, an arm of Sunil Mittal-founded Bharti Airtel, runs mobile services in Rajasthan and Northeast circles. It has over 19 million customers.

NEW DELHI: State-run Telecom Consultants of India Ltd (TCIL) will shortly name a consultant to prepare its exit roadmap from Bharti Hexacom, in which it holds 30%, even as it targets a 25% on year standalone revenue growth for this fiscal year, chairman & managing director Vimal Wakhlu said.

Bharti Hexacom, an arm of Sunil Mittal-founded Bharti Airte runs mobile services in Rajasthan and Northeast circles. It has over 19 million customers.

Wakhlu is also hopeful that the government will expedite its divestment plans in the telecom

PSU, which has been hanging fire for more than two years.

Divestment of 10% government equity in TCIL was approved by the Department of Disinvestment in March 2012 but was deferred by the Telecom Commission last year owing to unfavourable market conditions.

Set up in 1978, TCIL is an engineering and consultancy company focused mainly on the telecom sector. It is looking to the Hexacom exit and divestment to generate cash to meet its growing capex/opex needs and also execute new projects.

Earlier, TCIL's plans to exit Hexacom had come a cropper two years ago when the then cabinet secretary K M Chandrasekhar dismissed the Rs 1800 crore reserve price fixed by Deloitte for its 30% stake as "too low". The government maintains that TCIL's stake valuation in Hexacom should be higher, especially since Bharti has subsequently acquired 3G airwaves in Rajasthan and Northeast.

"The plan is to generate more financial resources, but government has to choose the appropriate time for its stake sale in TCIL and also our exit from Bharti Hexacom," said Wakhlu.

He added that "putting in new capital is imperative," especially since TCIL is unable to participate in government projects through the 'build, own, operate & transfer' or BOOT model due to financial constraints.

He said TCIL also faces stiff competition from smaller rivals, with lower overheads. "These companies are executing jobs at lower price-points, which had made it a challenge for us to get work from private telecom companies in India".

But with a clutch of large contracts in the offing, TCIL expects to generate Rs 1000 crore standalone revenue in 2014-15, said Wakhlu. Its turnover last fiscal was Rs 800 crore.

Wakhlu said TCIL is "helping Reliance Jio Infocomm roll out fibre-to-home networks" as engineering & design services consultant. "We are involved in few cities in [NCR](#) including Ghaziabad, and as services roll out, we may also get newer cities as a part of extended partnership with Reliance Jio," he added.

TCIL has also bagged a telecom project in Middle East although it is yet to get the letter of award. It is also upgrading telecom infrastructure for telcos in Sierra Leone and is running a pan-African e-network venture across 48 locations.

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BSNL Kerala gets 6 lakh new mobile customers

Thiruvananthapuram

BSNL Kerala is a net gainer of up to 6.05 lakh connections in 2013-14 at the end of a churn induced by the mobile number portability regime. Some of the churn is also being attributed to the Kerala Circle's own drive to 'dial up and call back' erstwhile customers who had ported out due to various reasons, including quality issues.

Reaching out "We reached out to them, owned up mistakes and promised better services," MSS Rao, Chief General Manager of BSNL, Kerala Circle, told newsmen here. The results have been encouraging, reflected in part in the net gains in connections. "Two lakh customers left us in 2013-14 but eight lakh ported in during the same period," Rao said.

While the large footprint and the sheer variety of services offered is a matter of pride, it poses a huge logistical challenge, he pointed out. For instance, BSNL Kerala commands a market share of 96.11 per cent in landline connections; 26.29 per cent in wireless (second position); and 32.32 per cent, with a penetration of 23.79 per cent, in broadband.

Quality challenge

But services offered include fibre-to-the-home; Wi Max; value-added services over landline and mobile network; intelligent network services; leased line and virtual private networks, among others.

"The challenge is in ensuring high quality in new-age services delivered to every customer by a legacy workforce," Rao explained.

BSNL Kerala proposes to square up by training workforce on a war-footing. "We will be aggressive with our strategy to improve voice services and shall strive to offer data at higher speeds during this year." Giving details of the financial performance, Rao said BSNL Kerala posted a profit of ₹287 crore in 2012-13. He expects the company to clock in a higher profit of around ₹400 crore in 2013-14.

The Circle has unveiled a number of initiatives to take service to the door step of customers.

Direct selling agents/retailers will be made available every 50 to 100 metres.

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73% of Indian childrens use Facebook inspite 13 years of minimum age: ASSOCHAM

09 May 2014



The study, conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). The survey was conducted on 4,200 parents of children aged between 8 years and 13 years in major metropolitan cities like Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Pune, Lucknow and Dehradun, among others, 75% of parents whose children are in the age group of 8-13 years were aware of their child signing up for the website.

"Minors lack the experience or judgement to use a social network and this raises the scary possibility of predators tracking down kids who reveal their age in an online chat, to cyber bullying and sexual abuse," Chairman of Assocham Health Committee B K Rao said, Reports, PTI

Nearly 25 percent of 13-year-olds, 22% percentof 11-year-olds and 15 percent of 10-year-old are on Facebook, while 5-10 percent of 8 and 9 year-olds are also active on the site. The survey also revealed children with working parents are addicted to technology.



Facebook has emerged as the most preferred social networking site among this age group. Other sites like flick.com, Google Plus, Pinterest are being used by 85 percent of children in the age group of 10-16 years.

The Indian government has issued strict directives against underage users accessing Facebook in order to deal with problems such as cyber bullying and online sexual abuse among other things. But this trend is dangerous as it can make children vulnerable to cyber bullying and online sexual abuse.

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