

After Bharti, RCom, and Viom, Reliance Jio to lease towers from BSNL; to launch 4G with the largest network of 300,000 towers

19 Mar 2014

Incumbent operators Bharti Airtel, Vodafone and Idea cellular have reasons to worry. Reliance Jio is set to launch its 4G services with the largest network of 300,000 towers, thanks to its strategy of going for infrastructure sharing.

It has already signed agreement for leasing towers with various telcos and tower companies. It will use 45,000 towers of Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Communications (RCOM); 82,000 towers of Bharti Airtel & Bharti Infratel; and 42,000 towers of Viom Networks, a joint venture between Tata group and SREI.

It will also deploy around 50,000 ultra-low cost base stations to roll out its 4G services.

Sources told **Telecomtiger** that the company is also likely to sign agreement with the government-owned **Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL)** for leasing its 62,000 towers. The PSU is waiting for the cabinet nod for allowing it to share its towers with private players.



If one adds all of them, then the number of towers comes out to be 300,000!

RCOM	45,000
Bharti Infratel	36,000
Bharti Airtel	46,000
Viom Network	42,000
Reliance Jio	50,000
BSNL	62,000

Reliance Jio will be leading the pack in terms of its size of network. India's largest telecom player Bharti Airtel (combined with Indus and Bharti Infratel) has about 135,000 towers; whereas Vodafone has around 125,000 towers.

Reliance Jio is presently doing trials of its 4G network in Delhi, Mumbai and Jamnagar of Gujarat. Once the trial is completed Reliance Jio is likely to offer services somewhere in September 2014. Reliance has both 2300 and 1800 Mhz spectrum to roll out services.

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BSNL expands broadband coverage in Chennai

BSNL Chennai Telephones has brought several key areas in the city, once deemed 'technically non-feasible' for sanctioning landline-broadband connections, within the reach of its underground copper cable network.

While underground cabling has now connected parts of Arumbakam, Koyambedu and Ganga Nagar in Urappakam, there are still about six 'shadow regions', including Ganesh Nagar (Adambakkam) and Radha Nagar (Chromepet) that are yet to be covered.

BSNL Chennai Telephones currently has 3.8 lakh broadband customers and shortage of certain types of copper cables was hampering efforts to scale up the broadband business.

Following arrival of fresh stocks in January, BSNL has started issuing connections in several areas, officials said. However, securing permission from the Corporation or the Highways for digging up roads for laying cables continues to be a bottleneck, sources said.

“We are aware that in many areas, prospective customers have been waiting for nearly two years for a connection. We will be seeking expeditious clearance for laying copper cables,” a BSNL official said.

Business managers of BSNL see a high market potential for broadband in the newly connected areas in the city. BSNL's plan is to bring all its 8.5 lakh landline users into its DataOne fold.

In several upmarket gated communities that have 500 units or more, BSNL is also pushing its fibre optic-driven Fibre-To-The-Home offering that promises a far superior broadband experience.

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India has Around 893.31 Million Wireless Subscribers As of Jan 2014 : TRAI Report

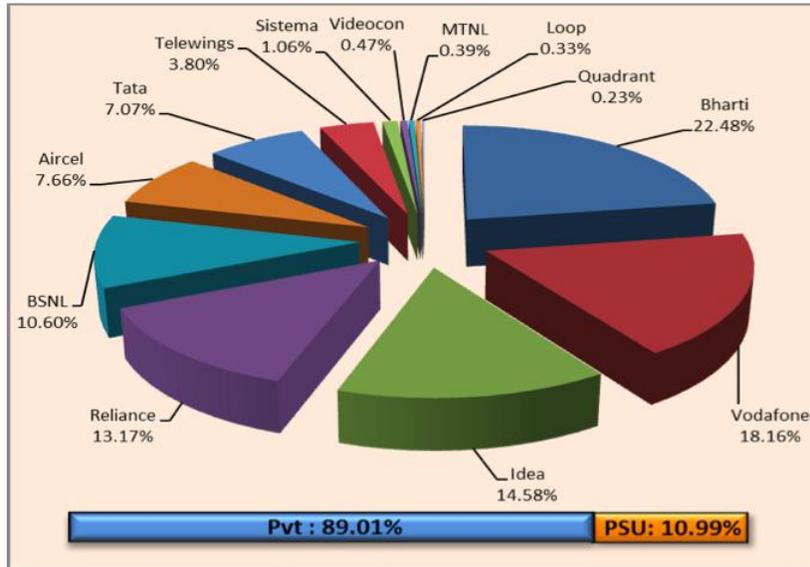
March 20, 2014

Total wireless subscriber base has increased from 886.30 million in Dec 2013 to 893.31 million at the end of Jan 2014 registering a monthly growth of 0.79%. The urban wireless subscribers has declined from 59.42% to 59/25% whereas rural wireless subscribers has increased from 40.58% to 40.75% as of Jan 2014.

Particulars	Wireless	Wireline	Total Wireless + Wireline
Total Subscribers (Million)	893.31	28.72	922.04
Total Net Monthly Addition (Million)	7.02	-0.17	6.85
Monthly Growth	0.79%	-0.59%	0.75%
Urban Subscribers (Million)	529.30	22.66	551.96
Urban Subscribers Net Monthly Addition (Million)	2.67	-0.11	2.56
Monthly Growth	0.51%	-0.48%	0.47%
Rural Subscribers (Million)	364.01	6.06	370.08
Rural Subscribers Net Monthly Addition (Million)	4.35	-0.06	4.29
Monthly Growth	1.21%	-0.99%	1.17%
Overall Teledensity*	72.18	2.32	74.50
Urban Teledensity*	139.42	5.97	145.39
Rural Teledensity*	42.43	0.71	43.13
Share of Urban Subscribers	59.25%	78.89%	59.86%
Share of Rural Subscribers	40.75%	21.11%	40.14%

New Subscriber Additions :

Airtel has added 24.33 lakh new subscribers followed by Vodafone which added 17.80 lakh subscribers. Idea Cellular managed to add 15 lakh new subscribers followed by Reliance which added around 4 lakh new subscribers. Aircel and Uninor added 15.32 lakh and 11 lakh new subscribers.



VLR Data:

Out of total 893.31 million wireless subscribers, 772.65 million were active on the date of Peak VLR for the month of Jan 2014. Idea leads the tally with 101.79% followed by Airtel with 96.16%. West Bengal has the highest proportion of VLR subscribers with 92.91% followed by Maharashtra. Tamil Nadu including Chennai has the lowest VLR proportion.

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"Is it high time that Government should bound all government agencies, Government Department / PSUs to take services from state run PSU like BSNL, MTNL or Railtel "

Vodafone accused of sharing data with British spy agency



UK based major telecom player Vodafone India has been accused by the Union Home Ministry of secretly sharing subscriber data with a British intelligence and security organisation, a charge denied by the company. According to documents of the Internal Security Division of the Home Ministry, Vodafone is alleged to have given the UK-based Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) **"secret unlimited access to their network of under sea cables, which carry much of world's phone calls and Internet traffic"**. "GCHQ's mass tapping operations has been built up over the past five years by attaching intercept probes to the transatlantic cables where they land on British shores," the home ministry documents claimed. "Intercept partners are paid for logistical assistance," it said. as per New report from [THE HINDU](#). Based on news reports, the memorandum said that leading telecom companies were learnt to be passing on details of their customers' phone calls, email messages and other communication and were known as 'intercept partners'; that Vodafone and others had given the GCHQ secret, unlimited access to their network of undersea cables, which carried much of the world's phone calls and internet traffic; that the GCHQ's mass tapping operation had been built up over the past five years by attaching intercept probes to the transatlantic cables; and that the 'intercept partners' were paid for logistics and technical assistance. Incidentally, based on the documents leaked by the U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden, The Guardian last August carried a report that said: "Some of the world's leading telecoms firms, including BT and Vodafone, are secretly collaborating with Britain's spy agency GCHQ, and are passing on details of their customers' phone calls, email messages and Facebook entries."

Now comes the Billion dollar question that "Is it high time that Government should bound all government agencies, Government Department / PSUs to take services from state run PSU like BSNL, MTNL or Raitel to make it secure and avoid such allegation / report in near future from foreign telecom players" ?

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Govt wants fast action against telcos

M Rajendran, Hindustan Times New Delhi, March 21, 2014

The communications ministry has asked the vigilance and legal arms of the department of telecommunications to expedite **actions against telecom majors Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, Reliance Communications and Tata Teleservices for allegedly violating licence conditions that resulted in a Rs.3,000-crore revenue loss for the government.**

"A number of cases have been pending for more than two years and some of them have revenue and security implications," said an official who attended a meeting last week that decided to issue the directions.

Communications secretary MF Farooqui is expected to take stock of the cases by mid April.

Bharti Airtel and TTSL declined to comment. Emails sent to RCom and Vodafone was not responded to till the time of going to print.

Some of the prominent cases that will be taken up for expedited action are:

Alleged under reporting of revenues by Bharti Airtel, Reliance Communications and others, which resulted in lower revenues for the government.

Alleged renting of SIM cards by Vodafone and Bharti Airtel, which resulted in revenue losses for the government. The companies have not responded to DoT queries on the issue for more than a year despite repeated reminders, officials said. According to minutes of the meeting seen by HT, DoT's chief vigilance officer Pankaj Kumar said: "...effective measures be taken to obtain information ... so that this long pending matter is brought its logical conclusion."

Alleged circumvention of licence fee payments in bundled handset schemes offered by Tata Teleservices.

Alleged loss of revenue because of 3G roaming agreement by Bharti Airtel, Vodafone and others.

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TCIL and Kuwait Telecom likely to ink a network upgradation deal worth Rs 2 billion

Thursday, 20 March 2014

Telecom Consultants India (TCIL) is likely to bag a contract worth Rs 2 billion for upgrading and maintaining Kuwait Telecommunications' landline and broadband networks.

TCIL has emerged the lowest bidder in a tender floated by Kuwait Telecommunications for expansion of its landline and maintenance of network. If TCIL bags the contract, it will handle network development and maintenance basis for the operator's wireline and broadband networks in a majority of the country's governorates or regions.

Since the project will be implemented on a turnkey basis, the lowest bidder will also be responsible for providing telecom gear apart from handling network planning and maintenance elements.

TCIL proposes to provide the required equipment and optic fibre cable-based systems through its foreign and local supplier partners, including Turkey's HES Cable Systems, Saudi Cables, Tamil Nadu Telecommunications and Aksh Optifibre.