

AFTER TARIFF HIKE SHOCK

In a First, Pvt Telcos Lose Users in July

BSNL, which didn't raise rates, gains nearly 3m users as market share of Jio, Airtel & Vi falls

Our Bureau

Kolkata: Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea (Vi) suffered major customer losses in July, for the first time ever in a month, triggered by sharp increases in headline tariffs in early July, showed data issued by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Friday.

The three private carriers raised rates by 11-25% in July. However, state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam (BSNL), which refrained from raising tariffs, was the only telco to gain new subscribers, reporting strong customer additions during the month.

Jio, Airtel and Vi lost 750,000, 1.69 million and 1.41 million users, respectively in end-July, shrinking their customer bases to 475.76 million, 387.32 million and 215.88 million, respectively. BSNL gained 2.93

Dialling Down

Telco	User Base	Movements
Jio	475.76	(-) 0.75 ↓
Airtel	387.32	(-) 1.69 ↓
Vi	215.88	(-) 1.41 ↓
BSNL	88.51	(+) 2.93 ↑

Source: Trai

Figures in million



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million customers, boosting its mobile user base to 88.51 million.

"I don't ever recall BSNL as the sole telco reporting strong customer additions in a month at the expense of India's top private carriers. But this is clearly because it did not raise headline rates in July," a sector analyst at a leading brokerage said.

Consequently, Jio, Airtel and Vi's customer market share in July fell to 40.68% (40.71%), 33.12% (33.23%) and 18.46% (18.56%), respectively over the previous month. BSNL's customer market share rose to 7.59% (7.33%).

Meanwhile, Airtel was the only private carrier to add higher-pay-

ing 4G and 5G users in July, gaining 2.56 million users. Jio lost 760,000 4G/5G customers, while Vi's combined 3G/4G user base fell by 1.1 million in July. Vi doesn't yet offer 5G services.

BSNL also doesn't offer 5G services and has just started 4G in some areas. The company recorded the highest wireless broadband user gains in July at 4.59 million, boosting its mobile broadband user base to 25.42 million.

BSNL also beat the three private telcos on the active user front, gaining 2.91 million customers in July to 49.49 million. Vi, Airtel and Jio, in turn, lost 3.03 million, 1.17 million and 210,000 active users, respectively.

Active, or visitor location register (VLR), data issued every month by Trai indicates the number of mobile users regularly using a mobile network and generating revenue for a particular telco.