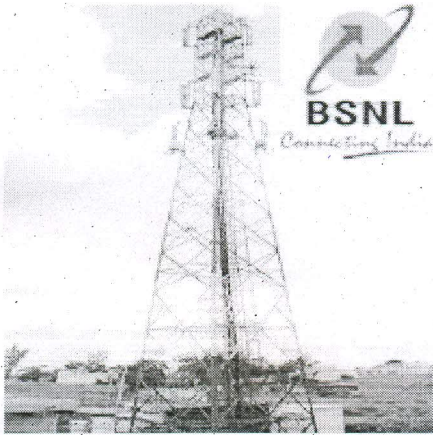


By [Pravin Prashant](#) March 17, 2015, 10:07 am [0 Comments](#) [Read More](#) →

BSNL To Add 15 Mn Lines, Complete Phase 7 By June



State run telecom operator BSNL would be adding another 15 million lines to its existing network and this expansion process would be completed by June this year. The adding of 15 million lines was a part of BSNL's Phase 7 expansion plan for which the company is investing around Rs 4,804 crore.

"The project is planned to be completed by June 2015," BSNL CMD Anupam Srivastav told TeleAnalysis. "We have completed more than 60% of the project so far," he added.

The Phase 7 of BSNL was planned to upgrade the state run operator's existing and old network by creating 15 million additional mobile capacity. The capacity addition will take care for both 2G and 3G. In Phase 7, BSNL is building 27,000 towers of which 15,000 will be for 2G and 12,000 for 3G. Presently, BSNL has around 97,000 towers. Phase 7 will help in plugging the gap of 2G, removing blind spots in mobile network and increasing data capacity by 30-40 times.

Initially the Phase 7 project was floated in 2011 to expand BSNL's networks in South, West and North East Circles. The process got delayed for many reasons including ITI's withdrawal even after bagging the project. Chinese firm ZTE and Alcatel-Lucent are the other two winners, bagging major chunks of the project.

BSNL has been reeling under tremendous capacity crunch which is affecting its overall performance. But the company, being a state run one, has its own demerits like long tendering process, red-tapism and frequent alterations depending on government interferences.

In the past, BSNL has tried four times to float a tender for network expansion. The last tender finalised by the company under Phase 5 of its expansion was in 2006 for 45 million lines which was later reduced to 14 million lines in 2007. After this, the company floated two more tenders for 93 million lines in 2008 and 5.5 million lines in 2010 but both were subsequently cancelled.

After the completion of Phase 7 expansion, the Phase 8 plan of BSNL will be taken up, and some part of it is already in place. BSNL's Phase 8 expansion will be mostly on setting up of WiFi hotspots and upgrading its 3G network.

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