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BSNL CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR ANUPAM SHRIVASTAVA

Jio entry a challenge, will match competition in tariff, says BSNL

NEW DELHI: State-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd on Tuesday termed Reliance Jio's entry into the market as a "challenge" for all operators, but said it expects to match the intense competition "tariff-by-tariff".

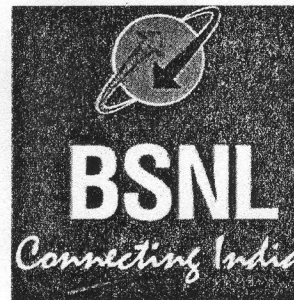
BSNL Chairman and Managing Director Anupam Shrivastava told the news agency that the telecom PSU will adopt an aggressive stance on tariffs going forward.

BSNL, which unveiled a promotional unlimited wireline broadband plan that effectively translates into less than Re 1 per GB download cost for very high usage subscribers, a day after Reliance Jio made public its 4G plans - believes it is in a position to match Reliance Jio's tariffs successfully.

"It is a question of survival in the market... There is no other way but to match Jio, tariff by tariff. If tariff of Jio is aggressive, the tariff of BSNL and of all other operators is also going to be aggressive," Shrivastava said.

Terming Rjio's entry as a "challenge for all operators", Shrivastava said competition is good for consumers as it ushers better offerings.

"As far as challenge is concerned, we cannot wish it away... I believe, BSNL is in a position to match Reliance Jio's tariffs most successfully, because we are incumbent operator. We are landline and optical fibre operator so our broadband tariff rides on our own network... We don't have to start procuring, investing and then come out with offerings," he said.



On whether Reliance Jio's entry would also prompt BSNL into announcing more aggressive tariffs, Shrivastava replied in affirmative saying "absolutely, there is no doubt".

BSNL offers unlimited night calling on any network in the country between 9 pm to 7 am as complimentary service for all its landline customers. Last month, it announced that its landline subscribers will be able to make free unlimited calls on any mobile or landline number in the country on Sundays.

BSNL has also announced a national unlimited 3G mobile data plan for ₹1,099 and doubled the data usage limit in some existing plans, to counter competition in the market.

Asked if BSNL too would consider giving free voice calls for its mobile subscribers, Shrivastava said, "We will think about it... In the next 2-3 months, we will see the impact of what is happening in the market. We could consider giving voice free, from our network but after charging some fixed monthly rate... Fixed-mobile convergence may be the basis of free voice calls." **PTI**