

Telcos surpass 500 mn user base target a year in advance

ET Bureau

NEW DELHI: The Indian telecom industry surpassed the target of 500 million mobile and landline subscribers in September, a year in advance, even as both the segments recorded a drop in monthly additions in September compared with the previous month, as per figures released by telecom regulator Trai.

Telcos added 14.98 million new users in September, lower than the 15.08 million that they added in August. Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Essar and Reliance Communications recorded a drop in monthly additions, while Tata Teleservices posted a positive growth, as per the Trai data. The total wireless subscriber base now stands at 471.7 million compared with 456.74 million in August.

The number of landlines in India has also declined to 37.31 million at the end of September from 37.33 million in August, on account of reduction in the wireline subscriber base of state-owned telcos — BSNL and MTNL — which together lost 0.06 million users in September.

In the mobile segment, Tata Teleservices, which recently launched GSM service under the Tata DoCoMo brand, roped in a little over four million users across both its platforms — GSM and CDMA — up from 3.4 million in August. The operator's performance was primarily backed by its new tariff schemes, including the per-second billing. Bharti Airtel, in the same month, recorded a drop in monthly additions. The leading operator added 2.5 million new users in September against 2.8 million in August. Vodafone Essar's user addition in September also fell to 1.9 million from 2.1 million in the previous month, while RCOM's monthly addition fell to 2 million from 2.1 million in August.

Another telco, Idea Cellular added about 1.3 million new users during August, lower than 1.5 million in the previous month, while Aircel and BSNL recorded a flat growth with 1.3 million new additions.