



Mobile Phone Operators working round the clock to ensure service and minimize disruption from Cyclone Phailin

- Emergency Call Centers have been made operational since 12th October by all operators
- Spectrum-sharing is being used by the operators to ensure continuity of service
- Operators have made available additional mobile BTS and satellite terminals in the affected areas

New Delhi, 14th October 2013: Telecom Operators have mobilized resources to restore communication facilities to the victims of the Cyclone Phailin which has severely affected the telecom networks of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. As per the status received till 13th October 2013, around 3472 out of 12163 telecom sites in Odisha and 74 out of 33742 telecom sites in Andhra Pradesh, belonging to COAI member operators have been affected by the Phailin cyclone.

All COAI member operators are working 24x7 to restore these sites. More than 40% of these sites have been restored within 24 hours of the storm hitting the region. The operators are working to evaluate the damage and restore the balance sites within the next 48 hours.

The COAI member operators are not only aggressively restoring their affected sites but have also set up helpline centers to help the local population. The Service providers have made available additional mobile BTS and satellite terminals in the affected areas and are continuously coordinating with the local offices. Also, the operators have agreed to share their resources by implementing spectrum-sharing under the DoT guideline to deal with such emergency situations, so as to ensure that there is no interruption in services for the customers in case a particular operator's services get affected. The customer would be able to access the network of another operator through intra-circle roaming to avail the required telecom services. Continuous monitoring of sites is being done in the affected districts. Arrangements have been made for storing enough diesel to keep the BTS running to overcome the total power blackout in the affected areas.

Mr. Rajan S Mathews, Director General, COAI stated, *"Despite all the difficulties, the operators are working 24x7 to restore the services and help reach out to the people in affected areas. We are optimistic that in 48 hours, most of the network in the affected areas will be restored to normalcy in terms of mobile connectivity and services."*

All the operators have implemented emergency helpline numbers 1948 and 1949 in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh respectively. Additionally, the operators have set up their own helpline numbers to reach out to the people in the areas affected by cyclone. Airtel has managed to restore all sites at Andhra Pradesh

within 24 hours and more than 500 impacted sites have been restored within Odisha. Vodafone has managed to restore 593 out of its 1289 sites in the affected regions of Odisha. 1502 sites of Aircel were affected in Odisha due to the cyclone out of which they have restored 622. Idea has restored 242 out of the 733 sites affected in Odisha. In Andhra Pradesh, all affected sites of COAI members have been restored including 6 affected sites of Uninor.

Operators are facing problems in some areas in restoring operations due to non-accessibility by road in affected areas/sites. The Ganjam district in Odisha, for example, is the most severely hit and the service providers have requested assistance urgently from the government for restoration of grid power, availability of diesel and opening up of road access to flooded areas there. Efforts are being made by the industry to ensure immediate restoration of services and for reaching out and helping people in other affected areas as well.

About COAI:

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society dedicated to the advancement of communication, particularly modern communication through Cellular Mobile Telephone Services. With a vision to establish and sustain a world-class cellular infrastructure and facilitate affordable mobile communication services in India, COAI's main objectives are to protect the common & collective interests of its members. (<http://www.coai.in/>).