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RCom WiMax launch today


Padmaja Shastri | TNN

Pune: Reliance Communications (RCom), an Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) company, will kickstart its national roll-out of its WiMax services for small and medium businesses (SMBs) from Pune on Tuesday.

The company has signed up with Cisco for the initiative. Worldwide inter-operability for microwave access (WiMax) is a standard whereby high-speed (upto 75 mbps) wireless broadband connectivity is provided over long distances—around 16 km from a radio-transmitter. Compared to it, WiFi technology can provide internet connectivity for only upto 30 metres without being connected to a wire.

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SUPER CITY



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- The company has been providing services to residential segments in Bangalore

cording to an IDC survey.

It is emerging as the fastest growing infotech hub in the country and its software exports at Rs 15,353 crore for the fiscal year ending March 2007, were much higher than that

of its big brother, Mumbai.

What is more, the 'Pune Unwired' project has made it the country's first city where a combination of WiMax and WiFi is being deployed to make it wirefree. RCom WiMax is expected to help the company challenge that last bastion of Bharat Sanchar Nigam (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam—last mile broadband connectivity—by bypassing the wired telecom network.

The technology will even enable internet access to businesses or homes which are not connected by telephone lines or TV cables. The company has already been providing WiMax services to the residential segments in parts of Bangalore from the first week of this month. It will make buying broadband an off-the-shelf product as easy to buy as a pre-paid mobile connection. "In Pune, however the WiMax services will first be offered to enter-

prises in the SMB category and will later be introduced to residential broadband users," said a Reliance Communications official.

It is believed that the company will first concentrate on big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad, Bangalore, taking the tally to around 3,000 WiMax base stations in 25 cities this year. It would have the advantage of being one of the first movers in the segment. As of now, two telecom companies have launched WiMax services for the SMB segment—VSNL at Bangalore and Aircel Cellular in Chennai.

A host of other telecom players, including BSNL and Bharti Airtel, too are testing WiMax and are expected to enter the bandwagon soon. Between them, they are expected to cover around 200 cities. For most of them, Pune is expected to be the launchpad.