

#### **Company Focus**

31 October 2007 | 8 pages

## **Bharti Airtel (BRTI.B0)**

#### Buy: 2Q FY08; Separating the Men from the Boys

- EBITDA in line, taking mild wireless setback in its stride Bharti's 2QFY08 EBITDA (up 11%qoq) at Rs27.1bn was broadly in line with higher contribution from non-mobile businesses covering the slight shortfall in mobile segment, which was impacted by 6% ARPU decline, a tad higher than expectations. Rupee volatility led to forex loss though partially offset by lower tax rates (7%).
- Lifetime impact moderate vis-à-vis Idea 2Q felt the full impact of the new lifetime schemes (Rs495 against Rs999), which was launched in mid-1QFY08. These lifetime subs come in at lower MOU/ARPU but the impact on Bharti's metrics was much more moderate vs. Idea. Mobile revenue growth of 8%qoq was respectable although rev/min decline at 4.5%qoq was in line with Idea's.
- What will MOUs do? MOU decline of only 2%qoq was a reassuring (coming after Idea's 6% decline) and could be potentially due to higher quality subs and greater resilience to competition. In the earnings call, management also indicated seasonality effect as well as tariff rationalisation; company expects the MOUs to remain relatively stable as it induces higher usage from new lifetime subs in the coming quarters.
- Other businesses showing promise, tower demerger in 3QFY08 Long distance business had a stable profitability and recovered from the rupee related setback in 1Q. Fixed line/broadband had a stellar quarter as scale economies and higher ARPUs flowed through in profitability. Tower de-merger will be completed in 3Q. Bharti remains our top pick.

Figure 1. Bharti Airtel – Sta	tistical Abstract				
Rs m	2QFY07	1QFY08	2QFY08	Y/Y (%)	Q/Q (%)
Income from Services	43,571	59,046	63,374	45.4	7.3
Access Charges	7,190	9,071	9,317	29.6	2.7
Network Op. Costs	5,228	6,824	7,520	43.8	10.2
Staff + SGA	10,242	12,858	13,159	28.5	2.3
License Fee	3,886	5,827	6,281	61.6	7.8
EBITDA	17,025	24,466	27,097	59.2	10.8
PBT	10,782	18,900	17,471	62.0	(7.6)

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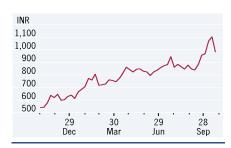
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See Appendix A-1 for Analyst Certification and important disclosures.

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Buy/Low Risk	1L
Price (31 Oct 07)	Rs1,021.00
Target price	Rs1,200.00
Expected share price return	17.5%
Expected dividend yield	0.0%
Expected total return	17.5%
Market Cap	Rs1,937,560M
	US\$49,245M

## Price Performance (RIC: BRTI.BO, BB: BHARTI IN)



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Source: Company reports

Fiscal year end 31-Mar	2006	2007	2008E	2009E	2010E
Valuation Ratios					
P/E adjusted (x)	85.7	45.5	27.8	21.6	18.1
EV/EBITDA adjusted (x)	45.8	26.6	17.0	12.7	10.5
P/BV (x)	21.0	14.3	10.0	7.4	5.6
Dividend yield (%)	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.9	1.1
Per Share Data (Rs)					
EPS adjusted	11.92	22.45	36.67	47.37	56.27
EPS reported	11.92	22.45	36.67	47.37	56.27
BVPS	48.67	71.50	102.02	138.77	182.41
DPS	0.00	0.00	5.50	9.50	11.30
Profit & Loss (RsM)					
Net sales	116,215	185,196	276,304	355,682	415,627
Operating expenses	-88,610	-135,896	-193,950	-244,212	-283,434
EBIT	27,605	49,300	82,354	111,470	132,193
Net interest expense	-2,512	-1,438	-3,555	-5,555	-4,657
Non-operating/exceptionals	272	999	3,000	1,000	1,000
Pre-tax profit	25,365	48,861	81,799	106,916	128,536
Tax	-2,539	-5,822	-12,270	-17,106	-21,851
Extraord./Min.Int./Pref.div.	-260	-468	0	0	100.005
Reported net income	22,566	42,571	69,529	89,809	106,685
Adjusted earnings	22,566	42,571	69,529	89,809	106,685
Adjusted EBITDA	42,981	74,125	117,017	158,198	189,112
Growth Rates (%)	45.0	50.4		20.7	400
Sales	45.2	59.4	49.2	28.7	16.9
EBIT adjusted	47.4	78.6	67.0	35.4	18.6
EBITDA adjusted	44.8 47.4	72.5	57.9 63.3	35.2	19.5
EPS adjusted	47.4	88.4	03.3	29.2	18.8
Cash Flow (RsM)	40.000	70.540	101 001	450.000	470.007
Operating cash flow	48,320	70,548	131,324	158,932	179,227
Depreciation/amortization	15,376	24,825	34,663	46,728	56,918
Net working capital	7,295	-672	23,898	16,840	10,967
Investing cash flow	- <b>54,095</b>	- <b>72,788</b>	-138,041	-129,359	-116,410
Capital expenditure	-57,309	-74,798	-138,296	-129,681	-117,310
Acquisitions/disposals Financing cash flow	3,631 <b>5,338</b>	1,952 <b>7,054</b>	0 <b>4,532</b>	0 - <b>24,013</b>	0 - <b>39,508</b>
Borrowings	-806	7, <b>034</b> 7,428	20,000	2,000	-10,000
Dividends paid	-800	0,420	-11,658	-20,136	-23,952
Change in cash	-438	4,813	-2,1 <b>85</b>	<b>5,560</b>	23,309
Balance Sheet (RsM)		,	,	-,	
Total assets	215,681	296,690	403,797	495,828	580,513
Cash & cash equivalent	2,649	7,464	5,279	10,838	34,147
Accounts receivable	14,203	17,982	22,104	24,898	24,938
Net fixed assets	180,971	248,403	352,357	435,310	495,702
Total liabilities	122,545	159,336	208,572	230,930	232,882
Accounts payable	. 0	0	. 0	0	. 0
Total Debt	34,503	52,461	72,461	74,461	64,461
Shareholders' funds	93,135	137,354	195,225	264,898	347,631
Profitability/Solvency Ratios (%)					
EBITDA margin adjusted	37.0	40.0	42.4	44.5	45.5
ROE adjusted	29.5	37.4	42.3	39.3	35.0
ROIC adjusted	21.7	27.0	30.4	31.0	30.5
Net debt to equity	34.2	32.8	34.4	24.0	8.7
Total debt to capital	27.0	27.6	27.1	21.9	15.6

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## "Lifetime" impact muted for Bharti

The 2Q saw the full impact of the new lifetime scheme (Rs495 as against Rs999), which were launched in mid-1QFY08. The lifetime subs come in at lower MOUs (that too mainly incoming), which affects average MOUs and rev/min. Impact on Bharti as expected was lesser compared to Idea. This has been due to 1) lower proportion of net adds as percentage of total sub base (2Q net adds 13% v/s 16% for Idea), 2) spreading of old lifetime rentals over 24 months also smoothens the impact on ARPUs and 3) Likely superior user profile of Bharti and hence greater resilience to competitive moves.

Figure 2. Bharti Airtel — QoQ decline in operating metrics vs. Idea						
	Bharti	ldea				
Rev/min (Rs)	-4.5%	-4.8%				
MOU (min)	-1.9%	-5.5%				
ARPU (Rs)	-6.2%	-10.0%				
EBITDA/min (Rs)	-3.6%	-10.3%				
Source: Citi Investment Researc	ch					

## Wireless - Separating men from the boys

Figure 3. Bharti Airtel -	- Wireless b	usiness para	ameters				
Rs m	1Q07	2007	<b>3Q07</b>	4007	1Q08	2008	Remarks
Revenue	28,411	33,022	37,579	42,431	46,976	50,579	$\ensuremath{\text{QoQ}}$ revenue growth of $8\%$ lower than past trend due to decline in $\ensuremath{\text{MoU}}$
EBITDA	10,341	12,179	14,129	16,604	19,087	20,728	
EBITDA margin (%)	36.4	36.9	37.6	39.1	40.6	41.0	Modest increase in margins with rising operating leverage
ARPU	441	438	427	406	390	366	Sharp decline in ARPU with higher proportion of marginal subs
MoU	441	451	467	475	478	469	Lifetime subs, seasonality and rationalisation cause decline
Prepaid % of net adds	93.7	92	96.2	97.3	97.5	95.4	
Data as % of revenues	10.8	10.3	10.4	10.1	9.9	9.8	
Population coverage	46%	50%	54%	59%	62%	65%	On track to achieve 80-85% coverage by FY09
Minutes (mn)	28,194	33,844	41,305	49,240	57,125	64,375	Robust growth of 13% in minutes continues
Rev/min (Rs)	1.01	0.98	0.91	0.86	0.82	0.79	QoQ decline in rev/min slowing
EBITDA/min (Rs)	0.37	0.36	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.32	In line with past trend
Capex/min (Rs)	2.74	3.51	1.26	1.42	2.71	2.73	
Source: Citi Investment F	Research est	imates					

## Long distance recovers

Rs m	1Q07	2Q07	3Q07	<b>4Q07</b>	1Q08	2Q08	Remarks
NLD minutes	2,882	3,628	4,429	5,004	5,856	6,774	Another solid quarter with 16% QOQ increase
ILD minutes	753	882	1059	1194	1243	1345	
Revenue	7,064	8,362	9,306	10,156	9,210	10,048	
EBITDA	2,750	3,367	4,002	3,640	3,169	3,462	
EBITDA margin (%)	38.9	40.3	43.0	35.8	34.4	34.5	
EBITDA / LD minutes (Rs)	0.76	0.75	0.73	0.59	0.45	0.43	Impact of rupee appreciation stabilised in 2Q

## Fixed line/Broadband benefiting from quality subscribers and scale benefits

Rs m	1007	2007	3007	4007	1008	2008	Remarks
Revenue	5.182	5.244	5.984	6.044	6.513	7.023	
EBITDA	1,193	1,069	1,613	1,727	2,100	2,790	
EBITDA margin (%)	23.0	20.4	27.0	28.6	32.2	39.7	Sharp increase in margins
ARPU	1202	1115	1198	1112	1121	1150	led by improved sub quality
Coverage of towns	92	94	94	94	94	94	
Number of DSL subs	383,000	473,070	550,000	593,230	652,818	705,512	

Rs m	1Q07	2Q07	<b>3Q07</b>	4007	1008	2Q08		Remark
Revenue	1,969	2,148	2,422	2,511	2,730	3,423	25% Sequential growth	
EBITDA	936	907	1,092	1,257	1,159	1,435	. 0	
EBITDA margin (%)	47.5	42.2	45.1	50.1	42.5	41.9		

**Tax rate:** Forex losses during the quarter resulted in Bharti's 2Q effective tax rate declining sharply to 7%. However, company maintained its full year effective tax guidance at 15%.

#### **Bharti Airtel**

#### Company description

Bharti Airtel, through its group companies, provides cellular-phone services in all the 23 telecom circles of India. The group also provides fixed-line phone services, broadband, long-distance and enterprise services. The company is listed on The Stock Exchange, Mumbai (BSE) and The National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE). Major shareholders are Bharti Telecom, SingTel and Vodafone.

#### Investment strategy

We rate Bharti Buy/Low Risk (1L). We believe continued robust wireless market expansion and Bharti's ability to capture this growth profitably will be a recurring theme. We estimate an FY07-10 earnings CAGR of 36%, more than double the broader market. We believe that competitive pressures, though intense, will remain rational as low revenue yields and moderate EBITDA margins leave little room for disruptive pricing. Additionally, most regulatory concerns are behind us and 3G recommendations, though discomforting, cannot derail the growth path, in our view. Combined with strong brand presence and good corporate-governance standards, Bharti appears a strong investment. The company has yet to realize the benefits of economies of scale, and we expect a slight strengthening of margins over the next 2-3 years. We also expect the towerco hive-off (Bharti Infratel) to be a value accretive looking beyond the immediate impact on margins, given Bharti's stated intentions to be a minority stake owner in the towerco.

#### **Valuation**

Our 12-month forward target price of Rs1,200 is based on Sep-08 core DCF of Rs1,010 and a towerco option value of Rs170. The DCF is based on a WACC of 10.7%, a terminal growth rate of 4% and beta of 0.9. We prefer DCF as our primary valuation methodology because the wireless market will likely continue to see robust growth requiring upfront capex but should generate significant free cash beyond FY09-10E. Our target price (net of towerco value) represents a FY09E P/E of 21.3x, P/CEPS of 14.0x and EV/EBITDA of 12.5x.

#### **Risks**

Our quantitative risk-rating system, which tracks 260-day share price volatility, rates Bharti as Low Risk. We are comfortable attributing a Low Risk rating for the following reasons: 1) Bharti has a track record of profitability and execution; 2) the company's capex plans are fully funded; and 3) SingTel's strategic shareholding leaves us comfortable with execution issues and initiatives. Risks that could prevent the stock from reaching our target price include competition-led tariff pressures, un-remunerative capex, overall market downside, and slower-than-expected execution of the tower sharing initiative.

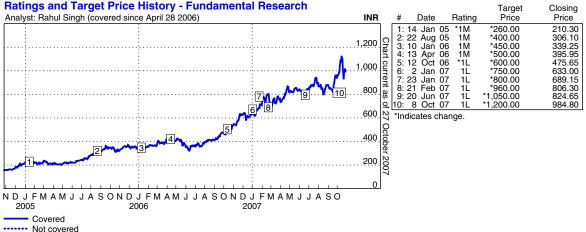
## Appendix A-1

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#### Bharti Airtel (BRTI.BO)

31 October 2007

#### rating.

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