Airtel Selects IBM and Red Hat to build Open Hybrid Cloud Network

Platform to ready Airtel's network for emerging technologies such as 5G and Edge Computing, enable its partners to deploy advanced B2B & B2C applications

Designed to enhance network efficiency and performance, improve customer experience

ARMONK, N.Y. and NEW DELHI, India, May 11, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), one of India's largest integrated telcos, has selected IBM (NYSE: IBM) and Red Hat to build its new telco network cloud, designed to make it more efficient, flexible and future-ready to support core operations and enable new digital services. Under the agreement, Airtel will build its next generation core network, analytical tools and new consumer and enterprise services on top of this cloud platform based on open standards.

With the new network cloud, Airtel intends to deliver a better customer experience through enhanced network performance, improved availability, operations automation and scaling the network to the edge. This is designed to reduce latency and improve bandwidth availability and automation, thereby strengthening the overall quality of the network.

India's data consumption is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 70% by 2022[1]. Adopting a modern hybrid cloud architecture enables communication service providers (CSPs) to deliver more responsive networks that tap into automation and AI to address growing customer needs and deploy new services at the right location and network tier.

Using IBM and Red Hat's portfolio of hybrid cloud and cognitive enterprise capabilities, Airtel plans to adopt an open cloud architecture that uses Red Hat OpenStack Platform for all network workloads and Red Hat OpenShift for newer containerized workloads. It will also tap into Red Hat's ecosystem of network OEMs. In the future, Airtel's open hybrid cloud platform is expected to help enable new revenue streams with the on-boarding of third-party services including gaming, remote media production and enterprise services. By embracing IBM and Red Hat's hybrid cloud technology all the way to the network edge, Airtel aims to achieve improvement in time-to-market of services, reduction in operating expenses and reduced capital expenses.

The network cloud will also position ecosystem partners, including B2B and B2C application developers, to create value-added services, including new edge offerings. The multicloud platform and end-to-end intent-based lifecycle management will help onboard these services faster on the network cloud and seamlessly integrate these services with current fulfilment, assurance and billing processes. Additionally, the network cloud is embedded with AI, designed to facilitate automation in onboarding and improvs monitoring and predictive capabilities for different services from network equipment providers.

"As part of our endeavor to build a 5G ready network for India's requirements, we are pleased to collaborate with IBM and Red Hat in our cloud journey," said Randeep Sekhon, CTO, Bharti Airtel. Our goal with this powerful, seamless horizontal approach is to make our network future ready and enable Airtel to efficiently serve the massive surge in data consumption. The hybrid cloud architecture will resonate with our customer-

obsession by providing improved flexibility, network stability and performance and bringing agility and automation in our network operations."

"Through its collaboration with IBM and Red Hat, Airtel will be building a modern, innovative and more responsive network infused with automation and AI, that will provide the consistency and agility needed for today's rapidly changing marketplace," said Steve Canepa, Global Managing Director, Communications Sector and Worldwide Head of Telecommunications, Media & Entertainment Industry, IBM. "IBM is a valued collaborator to many of the world's largest and most innovative communications service providers like Airtel as they transform their networks into open and secure hybrid multicloud platforms and prepare for the 5G and edge computing era."

"Red Hat is providing innovative open source solutions to help Airtel improve flexibility and reduce development time, so they can stay competitive in the rapidly evolving telecommunications market," said Darrell Jordan-Smith, global vice president, vertical industries and accounts, Red Hat. "By adopting a more agile approach to network operations based on Red Hat's open hybrid cloud technologies, Airtel is building a future-ready platform to meet the evolving needs of its customers."

About Airtel
Bharti Airtel Limited ("Airtel") is a leading global telecommunications company with operations in 18 countries across Asia and Africa. Headquartered in New Delhi, India, the company ranks amongst the top 3 mobile service providers globally in terms of subscribers. In India, the company's product offerings include 2G, 3G and 4G wireless services, mobile commerce, fixed line services, high speed home broadband, DTH, enterprise services including national & international long distance services to carriers. In the rest of the geographies, it offers 2G, 3G, 4G wireless services and mobile commerce. Bharti Airtel had over 418 million customers across its operations at the end of December 2019. To know more please visit, www.airtel.com

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About IBM

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Sources:
[1] https://www.assocham.org/newsdetail.php?id=7075

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