

STATUS OF TELECOM CONNECTIVITY

SATELLITE

With about 570 Kbps of international satellite bandwidth (of which less than 30% is utilised today), Kolkata is very well placed to meet the international connectivity requirements of IT/ITES companies. VSNL and STPI are the two service providers today. High reliability is assured thanks to the redundancy in STPI's satellite network (alternative routes to the US, one via Intellisat and another via an Asian satellite)

CABLE

Cable-based international connectivity, often considered important for voice-based services such as call centres, is available from VSNL. The latter uses dedicated OFC leased lines to Mumbai (provided by BSNL) to provide onward connectivity to the submarine cable landing station in Mumbai.

BSNL has significantly strengthened its network around Kolkata. The Government of West Bengal facilitates regular meetings with IT/ITES investors in the Salt Lake IT complex to ensure responsiveness to the latter's needs. BSNL is strengthening the Kolkata-Mumbai route (through additional redundancy along the overland OFC route) and is also slated to provide more leased lines on this route. The company, in the aftermath of a recent meeting with the Central and State IT departments, has agreed for Service Level Agreements (SLA).s

Availability and reliability are also set to go up significantly due to a variety of other factors:

- i. Reliance, which holds the basic telephony license for West Bengal and the cellular license outside Kolkata, is likely to complete its National Long Distance (NLD) network, well as the state-wide basic services network, by end of 2003. This will provide an additional domestic leased line option to players like VSNL
- ii. Bharti-i2i has plans to create one of its International access hubs in Kolkata. The completion of the Bharti Long Distance link from Vishakapatnam to Kolkata will help Bharti offer seamless International services through its own NLD network. In the intermediate term, it will be able to use domestic leased lines from other infrastructure providers (i.e. Railtel) to provide these services by November 2003.
- iii. Railtel has completed its first OFC between metros – the Kolkata-Chennai link, and is also looking at connecting the city to other metros. Bharti plans to lease domestic lines from Railtel and use them to provide international leased lines to Kolkata customers.