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Kapil Sibal inaugurates Viom Networks' Rural Service Centre

- Rural Service Centre a culmination of the Hon'ble Minister's vision to usher in Telecom Revolution 2.0 in rural India
- Innovative concept of 'Power of Tower' by Viom, to partner with Government in nation building exercise
- Rural Service Centres to drive the Government's vision of universal Education, Financial inclusion, Telecom services, Healthcare and e-Governance related services for rural India
- Huge employment and entrepreneurship potential for rural population

The Hon'ble Minister of Communications & Information Technology, Mr. Kapil Sibal, today inaugurated the model Rural Service Centre (RSC) of Viom Networks, India's leading independent telecom infrastructure company. Based on the vision of the Hon'ble Minister, the Rural Service Centre, set up at village Badshahpur in Gurgaon, is an innovative concept of 'Power of Tower', developed by Viom Networks for leveraging its existing infrastructure through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model to achieve the Government's vision of providing universal Education, Financial inclusion, Telecom services, Healthcare, e-Governance facilities and other related services to the rural population, thus ushering in the second round of telecom revolution 'Telecom Revolution 2.0' in the country.

Inaugurating the Rural Service Centre, The Hon'ble Minister of Communications & IT, Mr. Kapil Sibal said "I strongly believe that the telecom infrastructure sector offers a tremendous untapped potential that can be leveraged to enhance various Govt. programmes and initiatives in rural India. Telecom infrastructure, especially towers that are located at remote locations in the country can be used to promote various social and economic development initiatives. The industry can, in actual terms, become true partner of the

Govt. and play a critical role in promoting growth in rural India. Our host Viom Networks has demonstrated this impressively at their Proof-Of-Concept site at Badshahpur, Gurgaon. I urge the entire telecom infrastructure industry to come together and work towards making this concept a nationwide reality and help the people in rural India enjoy the benefits of connectivity and convergence and be Government's partner in progress."

During the launch of Rural Service Centre Mr. Arun Kapur, CEO, Viom Networks said "Having pioneered the shared telecom infrastructure services industry, it has always been our endeavour to offer various innovative products and solutions to our operator partners. Our telecom infrastructure solutions have significantly reduced investments and costs for telecom operators, resulting in affordable telecom services for the common man thus facilitating the first leg of telecom revolution in the country. The Rural Service Centre concept, envisioned by the Hon'ble Minister and developed by us, is yet another innovation aimed at leveraging our existing telecom infrastructure across the country to usher in the second round of revolution in rural India Telecom Revolution 2.0."

"Through these Centres we aim to partner with the Government to achieve their vision of bridging the digital divide through a range of telecom services, enhancing literacy in rural India, driving the agenda of financial inclusion, providing healthcare facilities & consultation using telecom infrastructure, plugging inefficiencies in the rural system by driving e-Governance and offering various other services aimed at bringing rural India into the mainstream, thus contributing to the Government's vision of Bharat Nirman. This concept can be adopted by the entire telecom infrastructure industry, providing the Government a large canvas to implement its various initiatives effectively that are aimed at the social-economic growth of the rural population", added Mr. Kapur.

The brainchild of the Hon'ble Minister and developed by Viom, the idea behind the Rural Service Centre is to utilize existing telecom infrastructure to partner with the Government through a PPP business model and provide various services and facilities to the rural population. The Centres will also help create huge employment as well as entrepreneurial opportunity at the local level. The company has plans to extend this facility at a pan-India level to its rural sites spread across 879 districts, thereby bringing the real Bharat into the mainstream. Viom's strong grass-root level presence will also aid effective implementation of Government outreach programmes such as Polio Vaccination drives, while the company's time-tested entrepreneurial culture and corporate ethics will ensure accountability and increased productivity in this innovative initiative.

The Rural Service Centre is aimed at offering a range of services:

1. Education for all - e-Education, primary and vocational classrooms
2. Universal Healthcare - vaccine storage, telemedicine leveraging telecom services
3. Financial inclusion through ATM services - biometric ATMs
4. e-Governance: access to PDS rates, Commodity prices, employment exchanges, payment of taxes, birth, death, land record registration
5. Water: provision of bore well water
6. Information Display Board - updated real-time information in local language, weather monitoring, mandi rates, immunization drive etc.

The available site premises will be used for offering a range of additional services such as mobile charging and recharging points, rural cyber cafes as an entrepreneurial opportunity to local youth, as well as other value added services such as utility payments (power, water, telecom bills), travel bookings, mobile top-up facility, weather monitoring, function as Business Correspondent (BC) to raise deposits, disburse tiny loans, recover bad loans, sell micro insurance, mutual funds, pension products and other third-party products, and receive and deliver small value remittances. The real estate and other assets (for e.g. 24x7 power availability) can be extended to other Government & private initiatives based on opportunities.

About Viom Networks Limited: Viom Networks Limited, a joint venture between Tata Teleservices and Quippo, a Srei Group enterprise, is the pioneer in Shared Telecom Infrastructure industry in India. In 2009, the parent company - Quippo Telecom Infrastructure Limited (QTIL) announced its partnership with Tata Teleservices Ltd. (TTSL) with the merger of their passive infrastructure businesses, resulting in the formation of a unified entity - Viom. The company further strengthened its leadership position with the acquisition of the tower arm of Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited in early 2010. Viom is an independent entity with over 38,000 towers and with over 89,000 tenants. The company plans to roll-out nearly 20-25,000 additional towers in the next two years and take the tenancy ratio to 2.5x from a current of over 2.25x. Viom is the strongest player in neutral host Shared In-Building Communication Solutions (IBS) with installations already completed at most of the major airports.

Services to be offered at the Rural Service Centre

1. **Education for all:** Aimed towards Right to Education (RTE), primary as well as vocational (professional) education will be provided by building an additional shelter in the tower site premises for uninterrupted learning sessions. This will further help build an educated workforce by providing opportunities for entrepreneurship and enhancing employability of the rural population.
2. **Universal Healthcare:** With an objective to make rural areas healthy, safe and equipped with medical facilities, provision of storing Life savings drugs is made in the freezer units installed within the shelters at the sites. The site premises could be used to carry out vaccination programs also.
3. **Financial inclusion through ATM services:** ATMs at the site will help promote financial inclusion in rural India. These machines can be used for disbursement of wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (MGNREGS), thus minimizing the role of the middle-man. These facilities can also be extended for selling other financial products such as infrastructure bonds, mutual funds, loan disbursements/collections etc.
4. **e-Governance:** Internet enabled computers will allow citizens to access various Government sites for information on PDS rates, Commodity Prices in various markets, employment exchanges, MGNREGA Sites etc. In addition services like payment of taxes, registration and access to birth, death and land records etc. can be used. Sahaj, a group concern of SREI, would aid in this endeavor.
5. **Rural Cyber Cafe:** Computers installed could be leased out to local entrepreneurs to be used as cyber cafe for providing not only Internet access but also value added services such as utility payments (power, water, telecom), undertake travel bookings, mobile top-up facility etc.
6. **Water:** Viom also aims to setup provision of bore-well water at all its Rural Service Centre sites in order to meet the acute storage requirement of local areas.
7. **Information Display Board:** A LED display board, installed on the boundary wall of the site, will provide access to updated real-time information in local language on various rural programs benefiting the local community: weather monitoring, mandi rates, immunization drive etc. The display board will run on remote low-power consumption and will be updated from a central control-room.
8. **Charging Facilities:** Electrical charging facility has been provided for mobile phones and rechargeable electrical lanterns.
9. **Security Cameras:** These will help the security guard in monitoring access-to-site, ATM and Education centre. These cameras can also enable remote monitoring of implementation of Education Programs and ATMs. These could be upgraded and mounted on towers for local area monitoring of sensitive areas.