

THE HINDU Business Line

70 million subscribers may have to shift operators

Our Bureau



New Delhi, Feb. 2:

Nearly 70 million subscribers may have to change their operators as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling to cancel licences. But thanks to Mobile Number Portability the change over may not be that tough.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India said there will not be much impact on customers as around 95 per cent subscribers belong to operators which got licences before January 2008.

"Customers will not be impacted from the cancellation of licences. Subscribers have the option to port out through MNP. We will instruct operators to inform their subscribers and come out with advertisement," the TRAI Chairman, Mr J.S. Sarma, said.

"The only catch is that any user who has been a subscriber of these operators for less than 90 days cannot undertake this measure. We are planning to issue an amendment to enable the subscribers of these operators to actually be able to port even before the expiry of 90 days," Mr Sarma said.

But consumers need not panic immediately. The Supreme Court has given a four-month window to the Government and the operators to implement its orders.

"Basically, the time period of four months is the time for the Government to decide to come up with an enhanced market mechanism. After four months, as the licences of the firms are cancelled, their customers will obviously have the choice of opting for another player through MNP," said Mr Rajan Mathews, Director-General, Cellular Operators Association Of India (COAI).

Some of the serious players like Uninor and MTS said that they would do everything possible to keep their operations intact.

Industry sources said that some of the operators could even take part in the auction and buy back the spectrum.

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Keywords: [Supreme Court](#), [telecom subscribers](#), [cancellation of licences](#), [Mobile Number Portability](#), [Telecom Regulatory Authority of India](#), [Cellular Operators Association Of India](#)

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