Bharti Airtel (BHAAIR)

CMP: ₹ 812 Target: ₹ 960 (18%)

Target Period: 12 months

riesearci

November 2, 2022

Healthy performance...

About the stock: Bharti Airtel (Airtel) is India's second largest telecom operator with \sim 32.8 crore wireless customers in India and \sim 13.2 crore subscribers across 14 African countries. It enjoys industry leading ARPU in the wireless business.

Q2FY23 Results: Airtel reported a healthy set of numbers.

- Consolidated topline came in at ₹ 34,527 crore, up 5.2% QoQ, 21.9% YoY. India wireless revenues were up 4% QoQ (up 24.8% YoY) at ₹ 18958 crore, led by ARPU, which came in at ₹ 190, up 3.6% QoQ, driven by higher number of days and subscriber mix improvement. Overall sub base saw a modest addition of 0.5 mn QoQ at 327. 8 mn. It witnessed healthy 4G Net adds of ~5 mn during the quarter, with 4G data sub base at 210.3 mn. The post-paid subscriber base also saw robust addition of ~283,000 subscribers at 18.3 mn. The India non-wireless segment also posted strong growth
- Consolidated EBITDA was at ₹ 17594 crore, up 6.4% QoQ, with margins of 51%, up 57 bps QoQ led by India wireless margins which were at 52.4% (up 116 bps QoQ), driven by lower SUC charges after new spectrum purchase
- Reported net debt (excluding lease liability) was at ~₹ 1.57 lakh crore (up
 ₹ 37769 crore, owing to deferred liabilities of new spectrum

What should investors do? Airtel's share price has been up \sim 68% in the past five years.

 Favourable industry structure of three players (two being strong), government relief, last tariff hike and fund raise has put Airtel in a sweet spot to maintain its relative strength among peers with a formidable digital ecosystem offering. We maintain our BUY rating

Target Price and Valuation: We value Airtel at a target price of ₹ 960

Key triggers for future price performance:

- Strategy on tariff hike as its pass through would bolster margins
- Relative market share gain from VIL, given its stressed balance sheet and long term potential driven by growth opportunity from 5G

Alternate Stock Idea: Besides Airtel, we like lnox in our telecom/media coverage.

- A play on recovery of multiplex earnings and consolidation
- BUY with target price of ₹ 675

Key Financial Summary (Year-end March) FY20 **FY21** FY22 5 yr CAGR (FY17-22) FY23E FY24E FY25E 3 yr CAGR (FY22-25E) Net Sales (₹ crore) 87,539 1,00,616 1,16,830 4.1 1,38,508 1,55,975 1,69,014 13.1 EBITDA (₹ crore) 36,482 45,372 57,817 10.4 71,356 84,163 92,535 17.0 Net Profit (₹ crore) (32, 183)(15,084)4,538 3.6 10,164 20,185 25,524 77.8 Adjusted PAT (₹ crore) (4,075)(1,300)2,840 10,164 20,185 25,524 EPS (₹) (59.0)(27.6)8.1 16.8 33.3 42.2 P/E (x) NA NA 99.9 48.3 24.3 19.2 Price / Book (x) 5.7 7.5 6.8 6.0 4.8 3.8 EV/EBITDA (x) 15.7 13.2 10.5 8.7 7.0 5.9 RoCE (%) 4.1 6.4 9.1 12.1 15.9 17.5 RoE (%) (5.3)(2.2)4.3 12.4 19.7 20.0

airtel

BUY

CICI direct

Particulars	
Particulars	Amount
Market Capitalisation (₹ Crore)	4,53,349
Total Debt (₹ Crore) - FY22	1,69,678
Cash & Inv (₹ Crore) - FY22	9,221
EV (₹ Crore)	6,13,806
52 week H/L	841/629
Equity capital	2,795.0
Face value	5.0

Shareholding pattern					
	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	
Promoters	55.9	55.9	55.9	55.1	
DII	17.8	17.7	18.4	17.5	
Flls	19.4	19.4	18.5	20.0	
Other	6.9	7.0	7.2	7.4	



Key risks

Key Risk: (i) Any subscriber churn; (ii) Increased competitive intensity

Research Analyst

Bhupendra Tiwary, CFA bhupendra.tiwary@icicisecurities.com

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research;

Key performance highlight and outlook

India wireless business -decent performance

The ARPU at ₹ 190, up 3.6% QoQ (vs. 2% growth expectations), was driven by higher number of days and subscriber mix improvement. We highlight the overall ARPU improvement was better than Jio, which saw ~0.9% QoQ growth in ARPU. Overall sub base saw a modest addition of 0.5 mn QoQ at 327. 8 mn. It witnessed healthy 4G Net adds of ~5 mn during the quarter, with 4G data sub base at 210.3 mn (overall data customers base of 219.1 mn). The postpaid subscriber base also saw robust addition of ~283,000 subscribers at 18.3 million (mn). The company indicated that given the unsustainable RoCEs of 8.4% in India and South Asia Business, a tariff hike is warranted. We highlight that while the management does expect a further round of tariff increase for pre-paid customers in the near term, it refrained from stating the timeline. We expect monthly ARPU to reach ₹ 225 in FY25 vs. current levels of ₹ 190, driven by one more round of tariff hike of 10% in FY24 and higher wallet share of premium subscribers.

Non-wireless segment remains robust

In the broadband business, Airtel witnessed strong growth driven by healthy net customer additions of 417k during the quarter to 5.2 mn. The collaboration with local digital cable operator on partnership model has enabled Airtel to be present in 1060 cities (added 77 cities during Q2FY23). We note that the company had also reiterated robust opportunity on Enterprise side (total market size of ~₹ 40,000 crore) and adjacent areas like *CPaaS*, *Data Centre*, *Cloud communication*, *cyber security*, *IOT* with similar market size. During the quarter, the company saw superior growth compared to peers and added to the market share gains in the enterprise segment.

Other highlights

- 5G: The company indicated that it has launched 5G in a few key cities and expects to cover 100% of urban areas and most key rural areas by March, 2024. The 5G launch will entail advancement of capex from FY25 to H2FY23 and FY24, with three year's capex likely to be at similar levels, as a chunk of 4G capex will be displaced. It also informed that while it does not intend to price 5G at a premium to 4G, it believes that overall pricing stack (of 4G) does need to go up from current levels given suboptimal RoCE (8.4%) of India and South Asia business. The company intends to use loading at existing towers for 5G expansion
- Rural focus: Airtel stressed on the need to bridge the rural coverage (currently at 96% for Airtel) with Jio given that 40% incremental 4G customers are from rural areas. Therefore, in the near to medium term, it would focus on expanding coverage there with the aid of data science and field study for demand. It intends to build lower cost lean sites to expand in rural areas
- SUC benefits: During the quarter, the company saw partial benefits of SUC and expects further benefits of ₹ 250 crore in the next quarter. Recall, that spectrum purchased in last auction had zero SUC, while the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had also removed the 3% floor rate on spectrum usage charge. Thus, weighted average SUC will come down drastically, resulting in ~₹ 2000 crore of annual EBITDA savings.

Bharti Airtel continues to report resilient numbers especially on the Indian wireless business front. The improvement in ARPUs and continued margin expansion remain a key positive. The non-wireless business momentum along with Africa performance, continues to be robust. Favourable industry structure of three players (two being strong), government relief, tariff hike and fund raise puts Airtel in sweet spot to maintain its relative strength among peers with a formidable digital ecosystem offering. We remain constructive on Airtel and maintain our BUY rating on the stock with an SOTP based target price of ₹ 960/share



Exhibit 1: Variance	Analysis					
	Q2FY23	Q2FY23E	Q2FY22	Q1FY23	YoY (%)	QoQ (%)
Revenue	34,526.8	33,815.2	28,326.4	32,804.6	21.9	5.2
Employee Expenses	1,208.6	1,173.0	1,101.0	1,123.5	9.8	7.6
Marketing Expenses	3,712.0	3,413.7	2,885.9	3,468.5	28.6	7.0
Access Charges	1,931.0	1,973.0	1,670.8	1,869.8	15.6	3.3
Network Operating	7,130.3	6,916.3	6,178.8	6,682.8	15.4	6.7
License Fee	2,951.1	3,138.1	2,679.4	3,130.6	10.1	-5.7
EBITDA	17,593.8	17,201.1	13,810.5	16,529.4	27.4	6.4
EBITDA Margin (%)	51.0	50.9	48.8	50.4	220 bps	57 bps
Depreciation	8,946.8	8,820.0	8,247.2	8,781.4	8.5	1.9
Interest	4,940.3	4,543.6	3,964.1	4,510.9	24.6	9.5
Exceptional Items	0.0	0.0	-722.1	0.0	-100.0	#DIV/0!
Total Tax	1,286.4	1,369.3	1,030.8	1,123.3	24.8	14.5
PAT	2,145.2	2,358.1	1,134.0	1,606.9	89.2	33.5
Subscribers (Mn)	327.8	329.3	323.5	327.3	1.3	0.1
ARPU	190	187	153	183	23.7	3.6

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

		FY23E			FY24E		FY25E	
(₹ Crore)	Old	New	% Change	Old	New	% Change	New	
Revenue	1,37,912	1,38,508	0.4	1,56,586	1,55,975	-0.4	1,69,014	Realign estimates
BITDA	71,273	71,356	0.1	84,929	84,163	-0.9	92,535	
BITDA Margin (%)	51.7	51.5	-16 bps	54.2	54.0	-28 bps	54.7	
PAT	11,633	10,164	-12.6	20,968	20,185	-3.7	25,524	
PS (₹)	19.2	16.8		34.6	33.3		42.2	

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Business Highlights (India)

- Overall revenues & EBITDA: Overall India revenues were at ₹ 24333 crore, up 4.3% QoQ, largely driven by healthy traction in India wireless business.
 Overall Indian margin was up 85 bps QoQ at 51.8% aided by wireless business margins expansion
- Wireless revenues & EBITDA: India wireless revenues were up 4% QoQ (up 24.8% YoY) at ₹ 18958 crore, led by one extra day and mix improvement driving ARPU, which came in at ₹ 190, up 3.6% QoQ (higher than RJio's ~0.9% growth). The company indicated that ARPU growth was driven by: a) device upgrades, b) data monetisation, c) premiumisation and d) bundling through Airtel Black. The management remains confident of maintaining growth in ARPU. India wireless margins was at 52.4% (up 116 bps QoQ), aided by partial benefits of lower SUC charges after new spectrum purchase. Recall, that spectrum purchased in the last auction had zero SUC, while the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had also removed the 3% floor rate on spectrum usage charge. Thus, weighted average SUC will come down drastically, resulting in ~₹ 2000 crore of annual EBITDA savings
- Subscriber base and 4G addition: Overall sub base saw a modest addition of 0.5 mn QoQ at 327. 8 mn. It witnessed healthy 4G Net adds of ~5 mn during the quarter, with 4G data sub base at 210.3 mn (overall data customers base of 219.1 mn). The post-paid subscriber base also saw robust addition of ~283,000 subscribers at 18.3 mn
- Minutes and data usage: Data usage per sub was up 4.2% QoQ to 20.3 GB.
 Voice usage per customer was down 2% QoQ to 1082 minutes. Total minutes on network was down 1.5% QoQ to 1063 billion (bn) minutes
- Non-wireless: On the India non-wireless front, homes services (broadband) revenues were up 6.8% QoQ at ₹ 990 crore, driven by healthy net adds of 417k customers during the quarter to 5.2 mn. Airtel business (enterprise) revenues were up 6.8% QoQ at ₹ 4665 crore and DTH reported revenues witnessed a decline of 2.6% QoQ at ₹ 729 crore
- Network capacity and capex: The company maintained its continued access expansion in the form of sites/tower additions (~8372 sites) and capacity through mobile broadband BTS additions (20825 additions in Q2). India mobile capex was at ₹ 3911 crore (vs. ₹ 3695 crore in Q1) with overall India capex of ₹ 5682 crore (vs. ₹ 5288 crore in Q1)

Business highlights (Africa)

- Africa revenues were up 4% QoQ at US\$1.31 billion. EBITDA margins were at 49.1% (up 23 bps QoQ). Airtel Money reported 10.3% QoQ revenue growth at US\$177 mn. In rupee terms, Africa revenues were up 7.7% QoQ at ₹ 10,445 crore, also aided by currency depreciation
- Subscriber base was up by 3.1 mn QoQ at 134.7 mn with ARPU at US\$2.9 up 4.4% QoQ. Data subs base was up by 2.1 mn QoQ at 48.6 mn while total data usage was up 13.9% QoQ at 662.6 bn MB. Data usage per subscriber was at 4.5 GB per month, up 12.5% QoQ

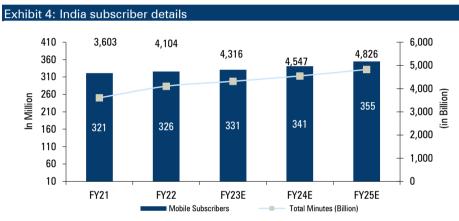
Other Highlights

 Consolidated debt and capex: Total capex spends (excluding spectrum) for the quarter was at ₹ 7047 crore vs. ₹6398 crore in Q1. Reported net debt (excluding lease liability) was at ~₹ 1.57 lakh crore (up ₹ 37769 crore, owing to deferred liabilities of new spectrum purchase

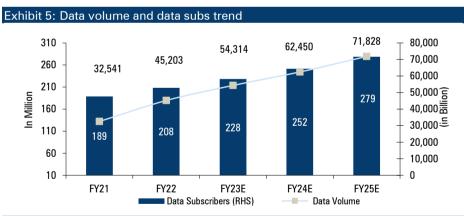


Revenues - ₹ crore	FY21	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
India	75,366	85,469	1,02,116	1,16,197	1,27,291
Mobility	55,568	63,205	76,400	87,285	95,103
Broadband	2,334	3,039	4,058	4,913	5,748
Enterprise	14,408	16,070	18,712	21,038	23,450
Passive Infrastructure					
DTH+ Others	3,056	3,154	2,946	2,961	2,990
Africa	28,863	35,061	41,142	45,217	47,709
South Asia	425	387	276	280	280
Total Gross Revenue	1,04,654	1,20,917	1,43,535	1,61,695	1,75,280
Intersegmental Elimination	-4,038	-3,983	-5,026	-5,720	-6, 266
Net Revenue	1,00,616	1,16,830	1,38,372	1,55,975	1,69,014
EBITDA ₹ crore	FY21	FY22E	FY23E	FY24E	FY24E
India & South Asia	32,841	40,912	52,008	62,917	69,587
Africa	13,298	17,207	19,569	21,856	23,366
Gross EBITDA	46,139	58,119	71,577	84,773	92,953
Intersegmental Elimination	767	301	221	611	419
Reported EBITDA	45372	57817	71356	84163	92535

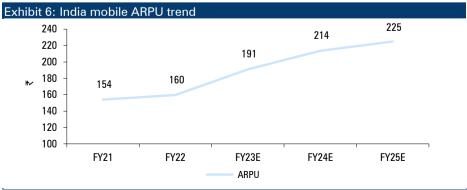
Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research *excluded tower revenues post H2FY21 after Indus Deconsolidation



Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research



Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research



Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research



Financial Summary

Exhibit 7: Profit and lo	ss stateme	nt		₹ crore
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Total operating Income	1,16,830.3	1,38,508.4	1,55,975.1	1,69,014.2
Growth (%)	16.1	18.6	12.6	8.4
Employee Expenses	4,433.3	4,889.2	5,434.6	5,870.6
Marketing Expenses	11,734.5	14,295.2	15,161.0	15,892.7
Access Charges	6,761.1	7,928.7	8,950.1	9,595.2
Network Operating	25,020.5	28,359.1	30,125.1	31,906.3
License Fee	11,063.6	11,680.3	12,141.9	13,214.8
Other Costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Operating Expenditure	59,013.0	67,152.5	71,812.6	76,479.6
EBITDA	57,817.3	71,355.8	84,162.5	92,534.6
Growth (%)	27.4	23.4	17.9	9.9
Depreciation	33,090.7	36,012.2	38,213.9	41,408.5
Interest	16,616.2	18,630.0	16,967.8	14,967.8
Other Income	534.3	754.1	720.0	680.0
Exceptional Items	(1,698.6)	-	-	-
PBT	10,343.3	17,467.8	29,700.8	36,838.3
MI / Profit from associates	1,627.1	1,896.1	1,200.0	1,000.0
Total Tax	4,177.9	5,407.8	8,316.2	10,314.7
PAT	4,538.3	10,163.9	20,184.6	25,523.6
Growth (%)	NA	124.0	98.6	26.5
EPS (₹)	8.1	16.8	33.3	42.2

Exhibit 8: Cash flow sta	tement_			₹ crore
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Profit after Tax	4,538.3	10,163.9	20,184.6	25,523.6
Add: Depreciation	33,090.7	36,012.2	38,213.9	41,408.5
Add: Interest Paid	16,616.2	18,630.0	16,967.8	14,967.8
(Inc)/dec in Current Assets	(463.5)	(5,714.2)	(4, 106.2)	(2,565.0)
Inc/(dec) in CL and Prov	2,419.7	16,337.5	13,023.8	9,722.4
Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CF from op activities	56,201.3	75,429.4	84,283.9	89,057.2
(Inc)/dec in Investments	-1,731.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
(Inc)/dec in Fixed Assets	-49,580.8	-71,000.0	-28,000.0	-28,000.0
Others	1,799.6	-4,117.7	-4,369.6	-4,203.6
CF from inv activities	-49,513.0	-75,117.7	-32,369.6	-32,203.6
Issue/(Buy back) of Equity	49.0	231.7	0.0	0.0
Inc/(dec) in loan funds	6,892.7	10,000.0	-20,000.0	-20,000.0
Dividend paid & dividend tax	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interest Paid	-16,616.2	-18,630.0	-16,967.8	-14,967.8
Others	3,014.3	5,188.8	0.0	0.0
CF from fin activities	-6,660.2	-3,209.5	-36,967.8	-34,967.8
Net Cash flow	28.1	-2,897.8	14,946.5	21,885.8
Opening Cash	13,466.1	13,494.3	10,596.4	25,542.9
Closing Cash	13,494.3	10,596.4	25,542.9	47,428.7
Source: Company, ICICI Direct Res	earch	·	·	·

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Source	Company,	ICICI	Direct	Rocaarch

Exhibit 9: Balance She	et			₹crc
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Liabilities				
Equity Capital	2,795	3,027	3,027	3,027
Reserve and Surplus	63,759	79,112	99,296	1,24,820
Total Shareholders funds	66,554	82,139	1,02,323	1,27,847
Total Debt	1,69,678	1,79,678	1,59,678	1,39,678
Deferred Tax Liability	2,449	2,449	2,449	2,449
Others	38,036	33,918	29,548	25,345
Total Liabilities	2,76,717	2,98,183	2,93,998	2,95,318
Assets				
Gross Block	3,69,739	4,40,739	4,68,739	4,96,739
Less: Acc Depreciation	1,91,715	2,27,728	2,65,941	3,07,350
Net Block	1,78,023	2,13,011	2,02,797	1,89,389
CWIP	5,955	5,955	5,955	5,955
Goodwill	33,831	33,831	33,831	33,831
Right of Use	32,229	32,229	32,229	32,229
Investments	31,622	31,622	31,622	31,622
Debtors	4,056	4,809	5,415	5,868
Loans and Advances	12,090	14,334	16,141	17,490
Other Current Assets	21,526	24,244	25,936	26,699
Cash	13,494	10,596	25,543	47,429
Total Current Assets	51,167	53,983	73,036	97,486
Creditors	29,274	34,912	39,314	42,601
Other Current Liabilities	57,665	68,365	76,986	83,422
Total Current Liabilities	86,939	1,03,277	1,16,301	1,26,023
Net Current Assets	-35,773	-49,294	-43,265	-28,537
Others Assets	30,829	30,829	30,829	30,829
Application of Funds	2,76,717	2,98,183	2,93,998	2,95,318

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 10: Key ratios				
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Per share data (₹)				
EPS	8.1	16.8	33.3	42.2
Cash EPS	67.3	76.3	96.5	110.6
BV	119.1	135.7	169.0	211.2
DPS	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cash Per Share	24.1	17.5	42.2	78.3
Operating Ratios				
EBITDA Margin (%)	49.5	51.5	54.0	54.7
EBIT Margin (%)	21.2	25.5	29.5	30.2
PAT Margin (%)	2.4	7.3	12.9	15.1
Inventory days	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Debtor days	12.7	12.7	12.7	12.7
Creditor days	91.5	92.0	92.0	92.0
Return Ratios (%)				
RoE	4.3	12.4	19.7	20.0
RoCE	9.1	12.1	15.9	17.5
RoIC	15.5	19.2	27.9	35.5
Valuation Ratios (x)				
P/E	99.9	48.3	24.3	19.2
EV / EBITDA	10.5	8.7	7.0	5.9
EV / Net Sales	5.2	4.5	3.8	3.2
Market Cap / Sales	3.9	3.3	2.9	2.7
Price to Book Value	6.8	6.0	4.8	3.8
Solvency Ratios				
Debt/EBITDA	2.9	2.5	1.9	1.5
Debt / Equity	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.1
Current Ratio	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Quick Ratio	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

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Buy: >15%

Hold: -5% to 15%;

Reduce: -15% to -5%;

Sell: <-15%



Pankaj Pandey

Head - Research

pankaj.pandey@icicisecurities.com

ICICI Direct Research Desk, ICICI Securities Limited, 1st Floor, Akruti Trade Centre, Road No 7, MIDC, Andheri (East) Mumbai – 400 093 research@icicidirect.com



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