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Bharti Airtel accelerates its Open Hybrid Cloud Network deployment with IBM and Red Hat

New zero-touch automation designed to improve network availability, agility, and customer experience

Armonk, NY and Bengaluru, India, Dec 8, 2020: IBM (NYSE: IBM) and Bharti Airtel (“Airtel”), India’s premier communications solutions provider, have completed the first phase of Airtel’s Open Hybrid Cloud Network built with IBM and Red Hat’s portfolio of hybrid cloud and cognitive enterprise capabilities.

With this deployment, Airtel’s customers and ecosystem partners will have a flexible foundation to build and deploy innovative applications on the cloud network. They will also gain enhanced performance, availability, automation, and scaling, all the way from the core to the network edge.

Telecom operators worldwide are expected to spend over \$111 Billion by 2022 upgrading their network cloud and platform.¹ With the ever-increasing customer demand for seamless connectivity services and the continuing exponential growth in data traffic, Airtel has embarked on this massive cloudification program to make its network agile, robust and scalable.

Airtel has been working with IBM to integrate end-to-end advanced automation and plans to embed AI capabilities in the future as a core part of its network transformation. In this first phase, IBM and Airtel have co-developed a “single-click” automated hybrid cloud design and deployment capability and “light touch” operations. This will enable Airtel to rapidly improve network connectivity and accelerate its continued core network transformation. As a result, Airtel will be able to scale to meet increased customer demand, onboard new partners more quickly, and speed the launch of innovative cloud-based services.

The architecture, which is built on open source technology, including Red Hat OpenStack Platform and Red Hat OpenShift, enables Airtel to manage communications across distributed network environments. This gives Airtel’s customers and ecosystem partners the flexibility to create more targeted, cutting edge solutions in the cloud or on-premises location of their choosing. Additionally, this open architecture enables Airtel to embrace open source Radio Access Network (RAN) to improve interoperability for ecosystem partners using RAN equipment.

Once fully implemented, Bharti Airtel’s Open Hybrid Cloud Network will help millions of partners and customers across industries rapidly harness the power of emerging technologies like 5G and edge computing. For example, a customer could use the network to leverage AI, IoT, and edge computing capabilities to power applications that can deliver better insights from factory floors or enable remote doctor visits.

IBM Services is setting up the infrastructure, designing and implementing Airtel’s open hybrid cloud network, and executing overall program management. This collaboration draws on IBM Services’ deep industry experience in helping strategize, design-build, and develop hybrid cloud platforms that integrate technologies, like AI and analytics, to enable the automation, management, and operations of a virtualized network.

“Airtel has been at the forefront of adopting leading-edge technologies to modernize our network architecture. By adopting an open hybrid cloud network with the support of IBM and Red Hat we are building a scalable and

*future-ready network to serve our customers with best-in-class services,” said **Randeep Sekhon, CTO, Bharti Airtel.***

*“Telco companies are at an inflection point in modernizing their networks and harnessing an open hybrid cloud architecture is fundamental to driving the scale, cost efficiencies, and innovation they need. Together with Bharti Airtel, our most recent automation benchmarks have demonstrated our approach can shorten RAN service deployment times from weeks to a few days -- compelling improvements in innovation for Bharti and their customers” said **Steve Canepa, Global Managing Director, Communications Sector and Worldwide Head of Telecommunications, Media & Entertainment Industry, IBM.***

*“With an open hybrid cloud architecture built on Red Hat OpenStack Platform and Red Hat OpenShift, Airtel can fuel faster innovation with greater flexibility, consistency, and agility. With IBM and Red Hat, Airtel is strengthening its network foundation so it can rapidly adapt to the shifting needs of its partners and customers and deliver advanced solutions, all the way to the edge,” said **Darrell Jordan Smith, Senior Vice President, Industries and Global Accounts, Red Hat.***

For more information on IBM visit: ibm.com/in

_1Based on Technology Business Research, Inc. NFV/SDN Telecom Market Forecast: 2018-2023

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