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Best OTT Bet? Team Up, Says Grameenphone

21/11/13

Bangladesh's leading telecommunications service provider Grameenphone, a joint venture of Telenor and Grameen Telecom Corporation, says that in spite of trying and testing various possible ways it couldn't find the best solution to avoid collaboration with over-the-top (OTT) players and now believes that collaboration is the only way.

"Over the years, we have tried everything we could but of no avail. We invested in building our own OTT services, our own applications center to tackle growing popularity of OTT players but nothing went our way. We have now realized that OTT-telco collaboration is the only way, hence we are now working with OTT players to monetize services," says Tawhid Rijwanur Rahman, General Manager – Service Planning, PDD, Technology at Grameenphone on the sidelines of the annual APAC Cloud Summit in Singapore.

While Bangladesh may be a late adopter of high speed broadband, the statement, coming from a telco, holds a special significance, considering the fact that the Indian telecom operators are also grappling with the challenges of finding the best way to tackle OTT growth and exploring new revenue models out of it.

The telecom operator with around 45 million subscribers in Bangladesh is preparing for 3G operations after obtaining spectrum in the country's first open 3G auction.

"We are excited about the data growth opportunity in the country. We are quick to learn in this market because of our experimentation and innovation. I am sure, 3G will be a great opportunity here. People are crazy about things like videos and YouTube in Bangladesh and it will drive 3G growth," Rahman added.

The company had won 10 megahertz of spectrum in the recently concluded auction that also saw operators like India's Bharti Airtel, Banglalink and Rabi, a joint venture between Malaysia's Axiata and Japan's NTT Docomo securing bids for 5 megahertz of spectrum.

The company says that it does not see Bharti Airtel in the country as a major threat now as was suspected earlier. "We have an early mover advantage. Bharti is

definitely growing and popular amongst youth. But it is not as aggressive as we thought earlier," Rahman adds.

—Jatinder Singh, Assistant Editor, [Light Reading India](#)