

KM Birla bets on Voda-Idea's long-term survival, growth

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Vodafone Idea has weathered the shocks and volatility in the telecom sector for over two decades and now is on its way to revival as the third major telecom company in India, Chairperson of the Aditya Birla group Kumar Mangalam Birla said in a note, reflecting on the current fiscal year.

Describing the recent resolution of the AGR (adjusted gross revenue) issue as a "decisive turning point," Birla said the fog had cleared for the first time in years, allowing Vi to look beyond survival towards sustainable growth.

"The Vodafone Idea (Vi) experience underlines my belief that tough times don't last. Tough companies do... A dogged focus on daily operations, service and network expansion, will now serve as the foundation for revival," said Birla in his annual reflection note, attributing the company's survival to loyalty of employees and customers, belief of business partners and shareholders, the Supreme Court's judgment and the government's intervention.

Birla stressed the need for



Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chair, Aditya Birla group

a three-player system in the telecom industry for India's digital future. "India deserves a successful Vodafone Idea. And this is an idea whose time has come," he said. Regarding its other arm Hindalco, Birla said the company will once again pivot towards investing in upstream capacity.

Over the next five years, it will deploy approximately \$6 billion across aluminium and copper upstream in India.

"Strategy must remain alive to changing realities. In Hindalco's case, two of the earlier constraints began to shift. China capped primary aluminium production, helping stabilise global prices. At the same time, with availability of critical raw materials, we managed to fundamentally improve our cost structure. The context changed, and with it, the strategic opportunity set," he said.