

Orange buys telecom operators in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone

PARIS, FRANCE: French telecoms giant Orange said Wednesday it has agreed to buy two of Airtel subsidiaries in Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone as part of its strategy of investing in emerging markets.



The two units of the Indian telecommunications group have combined annual sales of around 275m euros (\$298m). No purchase price was given, but Orange said it would be around eight times both companies' annual operating profits before taxes and charges.

"These acquisitions provide a clear illustration of Orange's international development strategy, which places a priority on accelerating growth in high-potential, emerging markets where the Group is not already present," Orange said in a statement.

The deal, still subject to regulatory approval, will add 5.5 million mobile phone customers to Orange's portfolio, it said. It will also raise Orange's African presence to 20 countries.

The purchase follows last year's initial deal for Orange to buy Airtel assets in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Chad and the Republic of Congo. The agreement concerning the latter two countries has now lapsed without any purchase going through, Orange said.

On Tuesday, Orange said it had agreed to buy Cellcom, Liberia's second-biggest operator, for an undisclosed sum.

Source: AFP

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