

Cellphone question mark at World Cup stadiums

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL: At least two of Brazil's 12 World Cup host stadiums will not be able to provide fans the cellphone and Internet coverage that organisers had promised, telecommunications companies revealed.



The Corinthians Stadium—which will host the opening match of the FIFA World Cup on 12 June—is unlikely to have any mobile connections. Image: [New Football Wallpapers](#)

The Executive Director of the industry's umbrella group, Sinditelebrasil, Eduardo Levy told senate committee hearings that there will be some problems finishing communications infrastructure for São Paulo's Corinthians Arena, which will host the opening match on 12 June, and Curitiba's Baixada Arena, which will host four matches.

"We received these projects and the rooms where the equipment is supposed to be installed less than 60 days in advance, when we need 120 to 150 days to carry out the work," said Levy, in an interview with newspaper O Estado de São Paulo.

The Chief of telecommunications firm Vivo, Antonio Carlos Valente, told senators the stadiums in Manaus and Porto Alegre could also face communications problems because of delays finishing temporary structures to house transmission equipment.

"In São Paulo and Curitiba we won't have time to perform all our tests," he said.

No Wi-Fi reinforcement

Communications Minister Paulo Bernardo said organisers should have invested more in Wi-Fi networks to back up cellphone communications.

"Unfortunately, in six stadiums there won't be any Wi-Fi reinforcement of the signal, which would help absorb data use by

fans. But that won't happen because the stadium administrators refused," he said.

"On the opening day of the World Cup, all the basics will be working, but with shortfalls. I think it would be better if there were Wi-Fi," he said.

Bernardo said he could not force private stadium administrators to install telecommunications equipment, and that the government was in the process of fulfilling its only communications obligation - to lay fibre-optic cable for TV broadcasts.

The mobile network was overloaded when Sao Paulo's stadium held its first major test event last weekend, and cell-phone communications were nearly impossible both during and after the match. Wi-Fi was however working inside the stadium.

FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke has criticised organisers for leaving final work on the still-incomplete stadium until the last minute.

He has also urged organisers to accelerate work on the temporary structures outside the stadiums used for telecommunications equipment, security personnel and the media.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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