

Satya Narain Gupta

Chairman, India and BIMSTEC, BLUETOWN

A telecom veteran, Satya N. Gupta has spent over 38 years in the telecom industry, executing telecom projects and creating and managing telecom entities. The most notable entity created under his leadership was a JV between Indian Railways and British Telecom, called Ircon Telenet Pvt. Ltd. This was later converted into a PSU by the Ministry of Railways, which is today known as RailTel Corporation of India. During his career, he has been associated with corporations like Ircon International, BT Global Services and Sterlite Tech. He has also worked with TRAI as principal adviser. Gupta has in-depth knowledge of next-generation network (NGN) technology and is associated with the International Telecommunication Union as an NGN expert and with the Commonwealth Telecom Organisation as an NGN trainer. Despite working in key roles across leading organisations, Gupta believes that his most exciting professional phase began only three years ago when he took up an executive role in a start-up. This involved forming an Indian entity for a Danish start-up, BLUETOWN, advocating their hotspot-as-a-managed-service business model, providing broadband access in remote areas on a revenue-sharing basis, and heading its operations to make it financially sustainable. “The most attractive part of this job was having complete freedom to run the business,” he says.

BLUETOWN has partnered with BSNL to build, operate and maintain Wi-Fi hot-



spots in the eastern parts of the country. It set up Wi-Fi-enabled hotspots in 1,000 villages during 2017 and intends to connect another 5,000 villages in each of the next two years. As chairman, India and BIMSTEC, BLUETOWN, Gupta is responsible for forging strategic partnerships in India and BIMSTEC countries, and exploring new markets to Connect the Unconnected.

In terms of management style, Gupta believes in delegating work. He considers his ability to execute projects as his biggest strength. “I don’t believe in a work-life balance, but am trying to practise a work-life blend,” he says. Gupta has triple master’s degrees in electronics design technology, IT management, and telecom policy and regulation, the first one from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. He is a voracious reader and has a flair for writing, speaking and professional networking. His family comprises his wife, Madhu, who is a homemaker, and their two sons. “My elder son works for a US multinational corporation in China. The younger one is working in Mumbai.”▲