Switching over to VoLTE

What is the issue?

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- With the VoLTE revolution kick started by the Reliance Jio, Indian telecom players are battling to retain their competitive position in the market.
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- Knowing the features and challenges of this new technology thus becomes essential.
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What is VoLTE?

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- Voice over Long-Term Evolution (VoLTE) is a standard for high-speed wireless communication for mobile phones and data terminals.
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- Under the earlier LTE, the infrastructure of telecom players only allows transmission of data while voice calls are routed to their older 2G or 3G networks.
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- Thus under LTE, one cannot access the 4G data services while on a call.
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- On the other hand, VoLTE, a technology update to the LTE protocol, allows voice calls to be ‘packaged’ and carried through LTE networks.
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- This would mean 4G data accessibility even during calls.
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What are the benefits of VoLTE?

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- VoLTE allows **voice** service being delivered **as data flows** within the LTE

data bearer.
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- VoLTE is an Internet Protocol Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) specification.
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- IMS enables a variety of services to operate seamlessly on the network rather than having to switch to different applications for voice or video.
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- The various benefits of VoLTE thus include:
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1. high definition voice quality, superior to the previous networks.
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2. faster, better and wider data connectivity.
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3. network would pick up 2G or 3G signals when VoLTE is unavailable, ensuring connection with both voice and data.
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4. video calls directly from the mobile number; this could avoid the necessity for applications such as Skype or Viber.
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5. as VoLTE counts voice calls as data usage, billing will be in terms of data consumption rather than minutes of usage.
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6. better battery life as battery consumption due to switching and searching for a network from 4G to 3G to place a call is not required under VoLTE.
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7. VoLTE thus facilitates a range of services such as video calling, file transfer, real time language translation and voice mail services.
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What are the challenges?

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- The service might be limited to mobile phones that are equipped with software to allow VoLTE function.
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- Also, there is a possibility for call drops in the initial stages of implementation.
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- Due to costs and complexity involved in the infrastructure, mobile phones

and telecom operators may find it hard for adopting it immediately.
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- Also, the incumbent operators are still dependent on revenue from voice, making them hesitant to switch over to VoLTE.
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- These factors could prove them uncompetitive in the market.
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- From the consumer end, the present free voice calls under VoLTE are not sure to continue with gradual change in pricing plans in future.
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Source: BusinessLine

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