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Recent Updates in the 5G Tech Space in India

Approval for installation of mobile towers

The Government of India approved INR 26,000 (Indian Rupees twenty six thousand crores) for the installation of 25,000 (Twenty five thousand) mobile towers in 500 (five hundred) days across the country. A spokesperson for the telecom ministry stated that the project will receive financial support from the universal services obligation fund and be carried out by Bharat Broadband Network. Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced this project at the three-day conference called the "Digital India Conference of State IT Ministers" which ended on October 3, 2022.

DoT summons mobile device makers, telecom companies to push 5G updates

The Department of Telecommunications ("DoT") summoned mobile device makers and telecom companies on October 12, 2022, to discuss complaints raised regarding the delay in releasing the updated software patches over the air by the phone-manufacturing companies, which will allow users of 5G-enabled phones access the recently rolled-out service.

Although 5G is available in a few cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Varanasi, telecom companies claim that customers with 5G phones are not receiving the service on their devices. Smartphone makers, on the other hand, have hit back at telcos, stating the limited coverage, owing to the limited number of 5G towers in operation, to be the cause of the problem.

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recommends telecommunication companies to install at least 10,000 (ten thousand) 5G towers per week

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw stated that telecommunication companies need to raise the number of 5G towers being installed every week to at least 10,000 (ten thousand) per week.

He also stated that the government is prepared to provide telcos with any necessary policy support as they scale up their 5G infrastructure but the rate of 5G roll-out must be maintained.

Companies approved by DoT for PLI Scheme

DoT has approved 42 (forty two) companies, for receiving benefits under the design-led production-linked incentive scheme ("PLI scheme") for manufacturing telecom and networking products.

The PLI scheme is essential to bolstering the value chain of various 5G equipment verticals. India primarily relies on imports for these. According to the DoT, the companies have pledged a total investment of INR 41,15,00,00,000 (Indian Rupees four thousand one hundred fifteen crores). In addition to the current incentives for products that are designed and manufactured in India, the scheme offers an additional incentive of 1%.

The government announced the PLI scheme last February and allocated INR 1,21,95,00,00,000 (Indian Rupees twelve thousand one hundred ninety five crores) for the same. The scheme's duration was increased by a year, and its coverage of design-led manufacturing was added back in May. The amended scheme included additional incentives worth more than INR 40,00,00,00,000 (Indian Rupees four thousand crores), as decided by the Centre. In essence, the policy was changed to focus on creating a solid 5G ecosystem.

Reliance Jio announces rollout of 'True 5G' service in Delhi, NCR cities

Reliance Jio, on November 18, 2022, rolled out 5G services in Delhi, adjoining cities and other major locations. Jio provides 5G services on a trial basis in 7 (seven) cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Varanasi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. In Rajasthan's Nathdwara, Jio offers 5G-powered Wi-Fi services but not direct mobile network services. The business has also introduced a special 5G welcome offer for all of its customers that provides limitless data at up to 1Gbps speeds at no additional fee.

Indian Telecom Gear Firms to Run 5G Trial for Railways between Palwal – Mathura

A group of Indian telecom gear makers has been granted approval by Indian Railways to establish a 5G-based mobile communication network between the stations of Palwal and Mathura as a trial. A senior official of the Voice of Indian Communication Technology Enterprises stated that the association's members will deploy 5G technology using the exclusive 700 (seven hundred) MHz spectrum band made available by Indian Railways. The successful trial will help association members to scale up their businesses and benefit from Indian Railways INR 5,90,00,00,00,000 (Indian Rupees five thousand nine hundred crores) modernization plans.

Telcos advised to refrain from installing 5G base stations near airports

DoT has directed Telecom Service Providers ("TSPs") to not install any 5G base stations in the 3,300 (three thousand three hundred) - 3,670 (three thousand six hundred seventy) MHz band in the area of 2.1 km from runways at all airports in India. The DoT also directed the TSPs to ensure downward tilting of 5G base stations to an extent such that the 5G emissions do not interfere with radio altimeters, which allow pilots to understand height. Further, DoT stated that these measures are to be adopted by the TSPs till the Directorate General of Civil Aviation ensures replacement of all aircraft altimeters filters.

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