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TRANSMISSION MONTHLY

1. NEWSHUNT RECOGNIZED AS THE BEST NEWS APP: NEILSEN.

News Hunt, the Mobile news application from Ver Se Innovation, has been recognized as the Best News Application in the latest Nielsen consumer rankings and is part of the Top 10 Smartphone Apps in India. With a reasonably high engagement, NewsHunt has been acclaimed for enabling users to consume news from regional sources.

2. LTE ADVANCED MODEM WITH FIRST SINGLE RF CARRIER AGGREGATION SOLUTION FROM ST-ERICSSON.

Today at Mobile World Congress 2013, ST-Ericsson announced the Thor™ M7450 LTE Advanced modem which uses a single radio for Carrier Aggregation. The M7450 supports all relevant 3GPP specified frequency bands having 10 flexible RF ports enabling 17 frequency bands or more in the same device. With this modem, ST-Ericsson significantly increases the number of LTE bands compared to devices currently on the market allowing device manufacturers to address a global market with less number of device variants.

With the roll out of LTE and LTE Advanced technologies, device manufacturers face a number of new challenges. Operators require terminals that support an increased number of frequency bands and consumers expect increased data speed and improved battery lifetime. Phone makers, however, cannot compromise device design and will need modem solutions that can do more in the same footprint.

3. ALCATEL-LUCENT NAMES NEW CEO

Alcatel-Lucent has named telecom industry Michael Combes as the successor to outgoing CEO Ben Verwaayen. Combes will take the helm as CEO on April 1, and will seek election to the board at the company's AGM on May 7, the vendor announced.

The new appointee has 20 years experience in the telecom industry, in roles including CEO of Vodafone Europe and CFO and senior executive vice president of France Telecom. Alcatel-Lucent announced earlier this month that down after more than five years at the helm.

Verwaayen had been appointed to restore reliable profitability to the company following the merger between Alcatel and Lucent in 2006. Verwaayen announced his resignation on the day the company reported a €1.37 billion (\$1.81 billion) loss for FY12.

4. TELSTRA TO START DEPLOYING LTE-A THIS YEAR

Australia's Telstra and Japan's NTT DoCoMo have both announced plans to augment their existing LTE operations with new spectrum bands, and in Telstra's case with the rollout of LTE-Advanced. Telstra revealed it will start adding the 900-MHz frequency to its LTE network, which currently operates on the 1,800-MHz band. The operator has also started trialing LTE-Advanced, and plans to start deploying the new technology later this year, concentrating on heavy-traffic areas.

5. JAPAN'S NTT DOCOMO PREPARING FIVE-BAND BTS FOR 700-MHZ LTE

NTT DoCoMo has announced a plan to start deploying base station antennas of its own design that support 700-MHz and four other frequency bands. DoCoMo will start deploying 700-MHz compatible base stations in advance of the spectrum being made available to provide LTE services in 2015. "The 700MHz band will help accommodate the expected rise in data traffic as mass users shift to LTE," DoCoMo's announcement states. The antennas also support the 800-MHz, 1.5-GHz, 1.7-GHz and 2-GHz frequency bands. DoCoMo was one of the earliest adopters of LTE, having gone live with its network in late 2010.

6. SAMSUNG, VISA FORGE NFC ALLIANCE

Samsung and Visa have announced an alliance aimed at accelerating global adoption of NFC mobile payments. Under the collaboration, announced at Mobile World Congress 2013, Samsung has agreed to pre-load Visa's NFC payment applet on its future NFC-enabled handsets. Financial institutions will be able to use Visa's Mobile Provisioning Service to push payment account information to these devices, to enable mobile payments through the app. The two companies have also agreed to pursue partnership deals with financial institutions to encourage NFC payment adoption and development.

7. GERMAN CELLCO TO OFFER FREE SMS, VOICE

Telefonica Germany claims a new range of mobile tariffs announced at the Mobile World Congress will revolutionize the market, by focusing solely on data revenues instead of voice and SMS.

The operator's local O2 business plans to launch its Blue pricing model on March 1, offering four distinct data packages with prices ranging from €19.99 (\$26) for an entry level package, to almost €50 per month for LTE access speeds. All four tariffs offer free voice and SMS communications on all German networks, a strategy René Schuster, chief executive of Telefonica Germany, says will transform the country's mobile market.

"We are the first German network operator that is gearing its entire rate portfolio towards the data needs of its customers," Schuster says.

Ovum Telco strategy analyst Steven Hartley believes the new tariffs are a good move for O2 Germany. He notes the carrier has to be disruptive in its pricing models in order to gain market share, and estimates the total cost of ownership of the most expensive tariff to be around €1,000 less than domestic market leader Vodafone over a two year period.

Hartley also backs O2 Germany's plan to offer multiple SIMs with the new tariffs as a winner, predicting the ability to share data allowances over multiple devices "will become an increasingly important model for mobile broadband in the future."

8. SISTEMA ONLY APPLICANT FOR MARCH AIRWAVES AUCTION

Russian conglomerate Sistema is the only company that has applied to bid in an airwaves auction due next month, a senior government official said on Monday.

Earlier, Sistema Shyam TeleServices Ltd had said it had applied to participate in the sale of spectrum in the 800 megahertz band, used by carriers operating on the CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access) platform.

9. VODAFONE WANTS REVENUE SHARE FROM GOOGLE, FACEBOOK

Vodafone India has joined other telecom companies, including Airtel and Aircel, to demand revenue share from Internet service firms like Google and Facebook.

Vodafone India's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Marten Pieters told *Business Line* that the company would like to have a regulation in place that would make it mandatory for over-the-top players such as Google to pay connectivity charges to telecom companies.

"It's a strange business model at present where telecom operators invest huge amounts of money to upgrade data networks and players like YouTube, who gets the revenue, don't pay anything," Pieters said.

Globally, telecom companies have been putting pressure on regulators to find a resolution to this issue. The main grouse is while telcos invest billions of dollars in setting up telecom networks, over-the-top service providers ride on these networks to make billions of dollars in revenue.

Content providers such as Google have been endorsing network neutrality on grounds that the Internet is free, hence should not be controlled by regulation. Supporters of this view argue that telecom companies' data networks are being consumed because of services offered by the likes of YouTube.

On the other hand, telecom companies are finding it difficult to keep investing on network up gradation to meet rising data demands. In India, Airtel and Aircel have made similar demands.

According to Marten, the worry for Indian telecom players is not as much as European players. "I am less worried here because the average revenue per user from voice is lower than data whereas in Europe voice pricing was high and data was low."

Speakers at the ongoing Mobile World Congress in Barcelona also echoed this issue. Telecom Italia CEO Franco Bernabe led the charge and his view was reiterated by Cesar Alierta of Telefonica, Randall Stephenson of AT&T, Xi Guohua of China Mobile, and Vittorio Colao of Vodafone.

"Colao disclosed how the threat from over-the-top players encouraged Vodafone to create the Vodafone red tariff, which offers unlimited voice minutes and eliminates price arbitrage. He also wants regulators to cease regulation of retail and wholesale mobile traffic and stop favoring new entrants that cannot stand on their own. It is a theme he began last year, but now his view is gaining support," said Emeka Obiodu, Telco strategy analyst, Ovum.

10. BHARTI COMPLETES CSFB TRIALS FOR VOICE ON 4G

BhartiAirtel Ltd. (Mumbai: BHARTIARTL), country's largest operator by subscribers and revenues, has said today that it has successfully completed the trials of CSFB technology in the cities of Pune, Kolkata and Bengaluru.

The company has announced to launch voice services for its 4G, TD-LTE (time division duplex long term evolution) customers in Pune, India through its existing GSM network, soon.

"We have now for the first time in the world tested voice fall back in GSM. Once the devices are ready in LTE, we can actually transfer calls from 4G to 3G to 2G. Softbank has done it and we have done it in Kolkata, Pune and Bengaluru," says Jagbir Singh, Director - Network Services Group, BhartiAirtel, in an interaction with *Light Reading India*.

Through CSFB option, the company would be able to offer voice to its LTE subscribers through its 3G and even 2G network. This is particularly significant since 4G networks are largely used for carrying out data services. With CSFB, the network can transfer the users to 3G or 2G network during voice or video calls.

11. BHARTI TO ROLL OUT 4G IN CHANDIGARH

BhartiAirtel Ltd. (Mumbai: BHARTIARTL) is all set to launch 4G services in Chandigarh by March 2013, according to the company sources. The country's top telecom operator has already launched 4G services in the cities of Kolkata, Bengaluru and Pune.

The company has 4G spectrum in four circles including Punjab and has also acquired a 49 percent stake in Qualcomm Inc. (Nasdaq: QCOM)'s Asia Pacific's Indian broadband wireless access (BWA) entities who has BWA licenses to offer 4G data services in four circles of Delhi, Mumbai, Haryana and Kerala.

The company has signed ZTE Corp. (Shenzhen: 000063; Hong Kong: 0763) as an equipment vendor for the Punjab circle. In addition, the Telco has pan-India 2G operations and 3G licenses in 13 circles.

12. FIRST INTER-MODE VOLTE CALL BETWEEN TD-LTE AND FDD-LTE COMMERCIAL NETWORKS AND DEVICES FROM RENESAS MOBILE AND ERICSSON

Renesas Mobile and Ericsson today announced a demonstration of the world's first inter-mode Voice over LTE (VoLTE) call using pre-commercial devices from a leading manufacturer. This will take place at China Mobile's booth 5I120 at Mobile World Congress 2013 in Barcelona.

The next step in the evolution of VoLTE, this demonstration, held in conjunction with leading Chinese operator China Mobile, illustrates Renesas Mobile and Ericsson's commitment to ensure the seamless operation of VoLTE across different networks. This converged TD-LTE and FDD-LTE approach enables operators to balance the load between each LTE network. It also permits international roaming independent of

consumers' device capabilities as terminals are currently TD or FDD only. Ericsson's convergent IP Media Subsystem (IMS) core ensures that VoLTE services are consistent, regardless of the underlying radio network (FDD or TD), to ensure a more consistent user experience. The Renesas Mobile multi-mode LTE SP2532, MP5232 and MP6530 platforms all have a convergence compliant IMS client supporting both networks. This also means that Renesas Mobile has the capability to support VoLTE on 3rd party application processors when used in conjunction with the SP2532.

13. SPECTRUM AUCTIONS SHELVED AS GSM TELCOS REJECT PLAN

The Indian government's attempt to sell telecom airwaves in the 1800 MHz and 900 MHz bands in March has come a cropper as companies found the price fixed by the government too steep. India's leading telecom operators - BhartiAirtel, Vodafone India and Idea Cellular - did not file documents to participate in the March spectrum sale by February 25, the last date for doing so. In the 800 MHz band, Sistema Shyam, the only applicant, will bag airwaves at the base price.

Telecom secretary R Chandrasekhar told ET on Monday that the auction would not take place. "No, there will not be an auction in both (1800 & 900 MHz) bands. In all probability, the matter will have to go to the Empowered Group of Ministers before a final view can be taken to work out a way and to go forward," he said.

Officials at both Bharti and Idea said their disinterest was on two counts. First the price of the auctioned airwaves were unrealistic compared with even 4G airwaves sold in developed economies such as the UK and Germany. Second, their debt levels and weakening cash flow did not allow them to raise further funds to pay spectrum fees of this order. The "complexity of the spectrum in India are not helpful," said Vodafone Plc chief, Vittorio Colao who spoke to this paper in Barcelona.

"Indian operations would not bid (for spectrum in upcoming auctions) if the price was crazy." In this round, the government planned to sell CDMA airwaves at half the price and GSM at two-thirds that of the first auction in November. In November, over half the spectrum on sale went unsold including that in Mumbai and Delhi.

Others smelt cartelization. "The conspicuous absence of bidders for the second round of 2G auctions is a clear case of cartelization by operators to force the DoT into a corner and bring it to the negotiating table to use the clause of 10-year automatic extension of license. However, the government has brought this upon itself through improper application of Supreme Court judgment," alleges BK Syngal, the former chairman and managing director of VSNL, who now works for Dua Consulting, a consultancy specializing in telecom.

A senior communications ministry official agreed with this thinking saying the disinclination to participate looked more like the work of a cartel and may lead to the inference that "they (the companies) are acting of one mind."

Industry officials, however, said the problem was simply that the price was too high.

The government's inability to find bidders for airwaves at the current base price bodes well for older operators such as BhartiAirtel, Vodafone India and Idea Cellular, as it signals lack of appetite of rival GSM players and presents the incumbents with an opportunity to garner spectrum at possibly reduced rates, ahead of their license renewals that begin next year.

14. BHARTI AIRTEL TO OFFER FLEXIBLE DATA PLANS TO PREPAID SUBSCRIBERS WITH TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FROM ERICSSON

Bharti Airtel, India's largest mobile operator, Tuesday said it had deployed a technology platform from Ericsson that will enable it to offer flexible data plans to prepaid subscribers across multiple domains - 2G, 3G, 4G/LTE and Wi-Fi. The solution has been deployed in all 23 regions in India. Over 95 per cent of the 900 million mobile connections in India are the pre-paid platform. "Ericsson and Bharti Airtel planned and executed the systems integration of the solution that will allow BhartiAirtel to enhance the prepaid customer experience by offering a wider and more attractive range of prepaid services, flexible bundling and real-time control of chargeable services," the companies said in a statement. Both companies did not reveal the deal size. Ericsson manages and maintains the networks of BhartiAirtel in about half the country.

15. TRAI SEEKS INDUSTRY'S VIEWS ON FREE ROAMING

Telecom regulator Trai moved towards abolishing roaming charges in 2013 as it sought the industry's reactions to a consultation paper for implementing the policy change. The regulator on Monday said the consultation paper analyses the pros and cons of different approaches to the regulation of tariffs for the possibility of mandating free national roaming.

In addition, the paper also seeks the views of stakeholders on the tariff regime for video calls and SMS while on national roaming and on allowing special tariff vouchers for national roaming service.

The regulator intends to wrap up consultation process within the next month as it has sought for comment by March 18 and counter arguments by March 25. Doing away with roaming will allow consumers to use a single mobile number or connection across the country at no additional charge than their original tariff plan.

16. ZTE AND IMAGINATION TECHNOLOGIES ANNOUNCE AVAILABILITY OF VOLTE ON COMMERCIAL HANDSETS

Imagination Technologies and ZTE, today announce the Hello Soft VoLTE solution is now available on commercial ZTE VoLTE-enabled handsets, powered by the Metro PCS 4G LTE network.

ZTE handsets with the embedded Hello Soft VoLTE client are available at Metro PCS stores in the Dallas (USA) region.

Imagination's Hello Soft VoLTE is fully standards-compliant with 3GPP Voice over LTE and GSMA IR.92 specifications. It incorporates award winning multiplatform Hello Soft VoIP, IMS, VCC, and VoLTE technology featuring AEC (Acoustic Echo Cancellation) and NC

(Noise Cancellation) to produce superior voice quality on 4G mobile devices. Imagination's Hello Soft VoLTE is deeply integrated into the handset and with the handset native dialer to provide a low-latency, superior voice and video user experience. Hello Soft VCC (Voice Call Continuity) technology enables seamless handoff of VoIP and circuit switched calls across 4G/3G/2G networks and also between multiple IP networks such as LTE and Wi-Fi.

17. TELENOR INKS 5-YEAR NETWORKS OUTSOURCING DEAL WITH ALCATEL-LUCENT IN INDIA

Norway's Telenor on Thursday inked a five-year outsourcing deal with France's Alcatel-Lucent for managing three GSM technology networks in western and southern India. Under the terms of the deal, the Paris-based telecom networks vendor will deliver end-to-end managed services to Telenor's wholly-owned Indian unit, Telewings Communications, in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The Scandinavian GSM carrier, which retails mobile services in India under the Uninor brand, had lost all its 22 permits last year after the apex court quashed the licenses dished out by ex-telecoms minister, A Raja.

In the last November auction, it only retained spectrum in six circles, and was compelled to switch off its networks in Mumbai, Kolkata and West Bengal circles. Bell Labs, the research organization within Alcatel-Lucent, will provide expertise on network and business modeling to achieve Telewing's objectives.

18. UNCERTAINTY WILL BE RESOLVED, SPECTRUM WILL BE AUCTIONED: FINANCE MINISTER

Finance Minister P Chidambaram on Thursday expressed confidence that the present uncertainty in the telecom sector will be resolved and spectrum will be auctioned. "For the present there is lot of uncertainty about auction but I am sure that this uncertainty will be resolved and spectrum will be auctioned. If the spectrum is auctioned we should get the money," Chidambaram said.

The Finance Minister said that if a serious telecom player wants to remain in the Indian market, he must acquire spectrum and cannot remain in the market without acquiring spectrum. "For the next year we have got a written statement from DoT which divides spectrum revenue into license fees, revenue sharing and the one-time fee and quantity of spectrum that they will auction.

"After they have given us in writing how the cash will flow we have taken this amount in to account," he said.

The budget for 2013-14 expects revenue of Rs 40,847 crore from spectrum and other fee. For the current financial year, government has lowered estimated spectrum revenue to Rs 19,440.67 crore from the budget estimates of Rs 58,217 crore.

19. BHARTI AIRTEL LEADS IN CONSUMER COMPLAINTS ON BILLING, TARIFF.

BhartiAirtel, country's largest private telecom operator, accounts about a third of the complaints on billing and tariff received by Trai in the first 10 months of this fiscal, Parliament was informed today.

"During the financial year 2012-13 up to January, 2013, Trai has received 2,419 complaints relating to billing and tariff including complaints relating to overcharging of tariff," Minister of State for Communications and IT Milind Deora said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

Quoting from the data, the minister said complaints against Bharti Airtel totalled 745, followed by Vodafone (505), Tata Teleservices (345), Reliance (329), Idea (194), BSNL (122), MTNL (36) and others (143).

On the redressal of complaints, Deora said the Trai Act, 1997 does not envisage the handling of individual consumer complaints by the telecom regulator. "However, Trai has been receiving complaints from consumers relating to unsatisfactory resolution of their complaints. The individual consumer complaints received in Trai are forwarded to the concerned service provider for redressal," he added.

20.3G SERVICES TO REMAIN ATTRACTIVE IN INDIA DESPITE 4G: ERICSSON.

European telecom equipment maker Ericsson has said 3G will continue to remain an attractive choice for data in India despite the launch of 4G services as there is a large scale deployment of third generation technology.

"The ecosystem plays a large role in adaptability. The large scale of 2G market benefited affordable devices. This will be the same, now when 3G deployed in larger scale, it creates a mass market and economy of scale. While 4G brings even higher speed, 3G will remain as attractive choice for consumers," Ericsson President and CEO Hans Vestberg told PTI during the Mobile World Congress here.

He said India will have both variants of 4G technology -- LTE-TDD and FDD-LTE. "Both LTE-TDD and FDD are only variants. As in other countries, India will also have both LTE TDD and FDD," Vestberg said.

Indian operators have launched 4G services using the LTE-TDD, while in other parts of the world FDD-LTE is the predominant technology for 4G services.

21. US JUDGE SLASHES FINE IN APPLE-SAMSUNG CASE

A US judge has reduced by nearly half the \$1.05 billion damages bill Samsung had been ordered to pay Apple following their high-profile patent trial. Judge Lucy Koh has shaved \$450.5 million from the damages after finding that jurors had not followed her instructions while calculating the figure. Koh also ordered a new trial to reconsider damages, but only to recalculate the sum – not to re-examine whether patents had been infringed. Apple's and Samsung's various appeals may also affect the total, and Samsung is seeking to have the verdict overturned and the case dismissed. For Apple, the decision

is another setback for its legal assault on Samsung, following repeated rebuffed attempts to secure a sales injunction on devices found to infringe during the trial.

22. GOOGLE IS INDIA'S TOP ONLINE BRAND

Google remains India's most trusted internet brand for the third year in a row, but the gap with the second-ranked Facebook is a mere 3%, according to a study by Trust Research Advisory. The group's Brand Trust Report India Study 2013 covered 19,000 unique brands across 211 categories. The research shows that Google (All India rank 44) fell 13 ranks and Facebook (All India rank 48) gained 17 ranks to bridge the gap. One significant change is that the number of brands represented in the internet category this year has gone up to 25 from just 14 in 2012, showing a direct increase in the trust internet based exchanges have begun to garner.

23. ITUNES U CONTENT DOWNLOADS TOPS ONE BILLION

Apple announced that its iTunes U content downloads have topped one billion. iTunes U features the world's largest online catalog of free educational content from top schools and prominent libraries, museums and organizations helping educators create courses including lectures, assignments, books, quizzes and more for iOS users around the world.

24. GOVT MULLING POSSESSION OF BLACKBERRY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Indian Government is mulling over possession of BlackBerry's server and other infrastructure in Mumbai to evaluate the effectiveness of company's solution for legal interception of internet communication.

25. INDIA MAY ABOLISH LOCAL ROAMING BY OCT

Indian telecom minister Kapil Sibal is pressing on with plans to abolish national roaming fees, and has indicated that the change could be in place by October this year, Indian telecom regulator TRAI has meanwhile launched a consultation proposing to effectively abolish STD rates, *Press Trust of India* said.

The consultation also calls for comments on the various interconnect charges operators pay to each other, and on whether carrier charges should be passed on to the caller in a roaming situation.

Indian regulators have been planning to abolish local roaming for some time. It is a key suggestion of the 2012 National Telecom Policy, which was approved by cabinet last May. But with STD fees accounting for an estimated 10% of the mobile sector's revenues, the move could have a detrimental effect on operators' bottom lines and may force them to increase call rates to compensate.

Industry body COAI has previously cautioned that as only around 10% of its members' customers avail of local roaming, the government's policy could end up harming the majority of consumers to benefit a few. The proposed policy could also require cellcos to modify their billing systems and processes, adding to their expenses.

26. RIL-SAMSUNG 4G SMARTPHONE DEAL: MARKET DISRUPTION AHEAD?

The Indian 4G ecosystem is still in its nascent stages and is set to flourish with a number of network roll-outs from the license holders.

However, a key challenge in developing the 4G ecosystem has been the devices. Especially so in developing TDD LTE devices because the global 4G ecosystem is tilted in favor of FDD so the device manufacturers tend to focus on FDD devices. This is a key reason why TDD LTE ecosystem is taking much longer to develop. (See the Who's Who on India's 4G Circuit.)

Presently, only fixed data services are being offered by the only 4G service provider, BhartiAirtel Ltd. (Mumbai: BHARTIARTL). However, the telecom department has recently allowed BWA spectrum holders to provide voice services over their 4G networks, which means that the market has also opened up for the device manufacturers.

With 4G gaining momentum by each passing month in the country, it seems Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) —now Reliance JioInfocomm—is readying to further catalyze the price sensitive telecom market with some of the biggest disruptions till now.

Even before the launch of its first 4G network in the country, Mukesh Ambani led RIL seems to be running ahead of competition with its reported partnership with global smartphone leader Samsung (Korea: SEC) to offer entry-level 4G smartphones for around \$100 (about INR 5,500).

It is not clear whether the deal is for TDD-LTE or FDD-LTE devices. While Reliance has spectrum in 2.3 GHz band, which is suitable for TDD-LTE only, recently DoT has started exploring the spectrum swap option wherein the BWA spectrum holders can swap their spectrum with 700 MHz spectrum. If Reliance goes for swapping its existing 2.3 GHz with 700 MHz then it would be able to offer 4G services using FDD-LTE technology.

According to a media report, the entry-level Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. (Korea: SEC) smartphones will be sold with RIL's data packages starting at as low as Rs 100, while high-end smartphones will be made available at minimum down-payments and the equated monthly installments (EMIs) will be incorporated in subsequent bills at a zero percent interest rate.

27. TELENOR GETS BREATHERS IN INDIA

Telenor has received permission from EGoM to adjust INR 1,658 crore license fee it had paid in 2008 against the license fee for newly acquired spectrum.

28. VIDEOCON MOBILE SERVICES GETS NEW TELECOM LICENCE FROM DOT.

Department of Telecom is believed to have issued new telecom license to Videocon for operations in six telecom circles for which it won spectrum in November 2012 auction.

"Yes, Unified License (AS) has been issued to them (Videocon Mobile Services)," a DoT source said.

However, it could not be officially confirmed with DoT or the company.

The company will have to shift to Unified Licenses when the final guidelines of the licenses will be released, the source added.

29.COAI ALLEGES BIAS IN ALLOWING ISPS TO OFFER VOICE SERVICES

Telecom operators body COAI has charged the telecom department with trying to give "undue benefits" to Reliance Industries by allowing companies having ISP licenses to offer voice calls by paying a small fee of Rs 1,658 crore each.

"We are greatly concerned and distressed by the unfolding of events on the attempts on the part of DoT to give undue benefits to a set of private parties, in this case RIL... under the pretext of migration of Unified License," COAI Director General Rajan Mathews said in a letter to Telecom Secretary R Chandrasekhar.

30. VIDEOCON GOES WITH NSN FOR LTE

India's newest entrant in the 4G fray, Videocon Telecommunications Ltd. has awarded the 4G contract to Nokia Siemens Networks , according to a press statement.

This would give the vendor a clear lead in the number of 4G deals in the Indian market. Nokia Siemens is already working with BhartiAirtel Ltd. for the Maharashtra (excluding Mumbai) circle. ZTE Corp. on the other hand has procured Bharti deals for the circles of Punjab and Kolkata. The other Chinese vendor, Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. has procured Bharti deal for Karnataka.

Ericsson AB is a major vendor which is yet to crack the LTE TDD market. The company had initially procured a deal with Augere Holdings but the company decided to close down its operations in the country. On the other hand, Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) , which is the only pan-India owner of Broadband Wireless Access Spectrum is believed to have awarded equipment contract to Samsung Corp. for Delhi and Mumbai circle. Videocon would be using 1800 MHz spectrum in nine circles for rolling out 4G network in the country this year. Bharti is another operator which plans to use 1800 MHz spectrum to roll out 4G spectrum. Besides Videocon, Reliance and Tikona are also planning to launch its services this year.

It is not clear whether this deal is for a few circles or all the circles Videocon plans to launch LTE services. Though it might not be a big deal for NSN, it has given the company an important door in the step in the 4G business it might generate later.

31. GOVT LIKELY TO GET RS 23,000 CR THROUGH ONE-TIME FEE: MILINDDEORA.

The government is likely to get over Rs 23,000 crore through one-time spectrum fee that has been levied on mobile operators for holding spectrum beyond a prescribed limit, Parliament was informed today.

"The demand on account of onetime spectrum charges has been raised against the licensees in respect of GSM spectrum. The government is likely to recover Rs 23,177.66 crore from the companies holding excess spectrum," Minister of State for Communications and IT Milind Deora said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. The government has issued the necessary order on December 28, 2012, Deora added. To a query on the steps taken by the government to recover the charges, Deora said the matter is sub-judice.

The government is likely to get Rs 6,911.86 crore from BSNL, Rs 5,201.24 crore from BhartiAirtel, Rs 3,599.40 crore from Vodafone, Rs 3,205.71 crore from MTNL and Rs 1,882 crore from Idea Cellular.

Earlier, telecom operators were given 4.4 MHz of spectrum with license at price of Rs 1,658 crore for pan-India operations and later they were entitled to get 1.8 MHz spectrum on fulfillment of certain subscriber base criteria. The government has decided that existing operators should pay for holding spectrum above 6.2 MHz retrospectively, from July 2008 to December 31, 2012. For spectrum above 4.4MHz, they would have to pay for the remaining period of their licenses starting January 1, 2013.

The operators were given the option to surrender spectrum beyond 4.4 MHz if they did not wish to pay the charges.

The price of the spectrum was determined on the basis of the price discovered in the 1800 MHz spectrum auction last year.

The operators are permitted to pay in equal annual installments for the balance number of years of license in a manner that the last installment is paid a year before the expiry of company's license.

32. DIESEL CONSUMPTION IN TELCO TOWERS COULD BE 5.12BN LITRES A YEAR.

Diesel consumption in over 5.85 lakh mobile across the country could be a whopping 5.12 billion liters a year.

"TRAI in its report has indicated an average fuel consumption of 8,760 liters diesel every year per tower assuming 8 hours of operation by diesel generator sets," Minister of State for Communications and IT Milind Deora said in a written reply to Lok Sabha today. Total carbon emission on account of diesel use by telecom towers is estimated to be around 10 Mt of carbon-dioxide, he said.

Deora, however, said no study has been conducted by the government to assess the quantum of carbon emission from the mobile towers. "There are 5.85 lakh mobile towers as on January 31, 2013 in the country and in all the mobile towers, diesel generator sets have been installed as a backup power," Deora added.

Asked about diesel consumption by telecom sector and loss of revenue to exchequer on subsidized diesel, Deora said actual data for consumption of diesel in the telecom sector is not available.

"Diesel available in the market is being used by operators in operating the cellular mobile towers in telecom sector," he added.

33. NO DECISION YET ON BASE PRICE FOR NEXT SPECTRUM AUCTION

A panel of ministers on airwaves failed to decide on the base price for radio frequencies for the third round of spectrum sale during its meeting on Wednesday. The third round of airwaves sale will be held after the March 11 auctions in which Sistema Shyam will be the lone participant. This sale is being undertaken after the Supreme last month directed the government to sell all spectrum vacated by companies whose permits were quashed in February last year. "No decisions were taken and the auctions will be done on 11th of March. After that we will assess the situation and go back to the court and inform them as to how we will implement their orders," telecom minister Kapil Sibal, who is part of the empowered panel of ministers on spectrum told ET. The Empowered Group of Ministers is headed by finance minister P Chidambaram. While the Supreme Court's orders freed up about 430 MHz of airwaves but the telecom department had put up only 271 MHz or units of airwaves for sale in the first round in November. That sale process turned out to be a damp squib with the Centre getting less than a fourth of its revenue target of Rs 40,000 crore as there were no takers for about 57% of the airwaves that were put on sale. In the auction to be held on March 11, the Centre had decided to sell unsold spectrum from the November auctions in the 1800 MHz band in four circles — Delhi, Mumbai, Karnataka and Rajasthan — along with a portion of airwaves held by incumbent operators in the 900 MHz band. But it has been forced to cancel the spectrum sale in the 1800 MHz and 900 MHz bands as it did not receive any applications for these frequencies. All incumbents had also obtained stay orders from different courts on the 900 MHz sale. The March 11 auctions will, therefore, be restricted to Sistema Shyam, which plans to acquire CDMA airwaves in the 800 MHz band in select regions. According to the agenda note, the inter-ministerial panel was to take a call on quantum of spectrum to be put on auction in each band for the third round of sales, as well as the base price for these frequencies. The telecom department had asked the panel of ministers to consider three options - retaining the current base price, revising it on account of the participation from mobile phone companies in the previous sales or seeking fresh suggestions from sector Trai on this issue. The Chidambaram-headed panel was also asked to decide on the timing of the third round of auctions as it requires about 90 days to conduct the sale process.

34. PASS ON BENEFIT OF ANY SPECTRUM PRICE CUT: SISTEMA TO DOT

Russia's Sistema has demanded that any cut in base price for airwaves in auctions should be extended to it, a move that may thwart the Centre's efforts at slashing the reserve price for third round of spectrum auctions. Sistema-Shyam (SSTL), which offers mobile phone services under the MTS brand on the CDMA technology platform, is the lone participant in the second round of airwaves sale that begins on March 11.

The Centre was forced to restrict the upcoming spectrum auctions to just the 800 MHz band used by CDMA operators as there were no bidders for the other frequencies.

35. MUKESH AMBANI'S RELIANCE JIOINFOCOMM DARES GSM PLAYERS TO FACE COMPETITION; DENIES CHARGES

Repudiating allegations of DoT giving "undue benefits" to it, Reliance JioInfocomm today dared incumbent GSM operators to face competition in open market rather than "indulging in any disreputable practices".

In a letter to Telecom Secretary R Chandrasekhar today, Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance JioInfocomm (RJIL) has alleged that GSM industry body COAI is working for selfish and short term interests of its members.

36. 4G SPECTRUM: NO UNDUE BENEFITS TO MUKESHAMBANI'S RELIANCE INDUSTRIES, SAYS KAPILSIBAL

The government trashed allegations by mobile phone companies that it had extended 'undue benefits' to Mukesh Ambani Reliance Industries (RIL) by allowing 4G spectrum holders to offer voice calls to customers by paying an additional Rs 1,658 crore for a pan-India license.

RIL is the only company that has holds pan-India 4G permits. "The decision to allow 4G spectrum winners to offer voice by paying an additional Rs 1,658 crore was based on recommendations of both (sector regulator) Trai and the telecom commission. The regulator said that everyone should be allowed to migrate to a Unified License and then offer voice," telecom Kapil Sibal told ET.

He said that any government decision that 'increases competition and reduces tariffs was good for consumers', while adding that company (RIL) had bought 4G airwaves at market rates.

37. SWAPPING SPECTRUM: FINANCE MINISTRY MAY PUSH FOR DOT-DEFENCE DEA

The finance ministry may push for a spectrum swap deal between the telecom department and the armed forces to free up 15 MHz or units of 3G airwaves in the 2100 MHz band for commercial use, creating a sizeable revenue opportunity for the government.

An official familiar with the matter told ET that the ministry may endorse a recent concern of GSM operators that blocking 15 units of airwaves in the 1900 MHz band for CDMA operators such as Tata Teleservices and Reliance Communications for another 10 years to meet a distant CDMA spectrum refarming need amounts to "a waste of a scarce national resource".

The ministry may explore ways to put this idle block of 1900 MHz airwaves to productive use in the armed forces and secure in exchange an equivalent chunk of 3G airwaves in the 2100 MHz band for commercial use in line with a recent proposal of the Cellular

Operators Association of India, the industry body representing GSM operators such as BhartiAirtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular, the official said. The ministry, whose economic affairs wing discussed the matter internally earlier this week, is likely to hold another round of consultations with Planning Commission and defense ministry officials to debate the pros and cons of urging the telecom department to exchange the 15 units of idle 1900 MHz spectrum for an equal quantum of 3G airwaves from the armed forces, said the official, who did not wish to be named. A senior telecom industry executive with direct knowledge of the discussions said "the armed forces may also be keen on such a swap deal as they stand to gain a larger block of contiguous spectrum in the 1900 MHz band that would be ideal for optimizing their network management operations," especially since their current spectrum holdings are fragmented. The government will also have an opportunity to maximize revenues by auctioning these 15 units of 3G airwaves in the 2100 MHz band, which is not only scarce but also hugely in demand as it offers the best device synergy for mobile broadband services.

The ministry's meeting transpired after the COAI, in a recent letter to Arvind Mayaram, secretary (economic affairs), said that "leaving precious 1900 MHz spectrum idle for another 10 years would disrupt broadband growth in India" and called upon the government to explore a swap deal with the armed forces to free up 15 units in the 2100 MHz band for 3G operators, especially since 3G airwaves are in short supply.

However, the ministry is likely to take a call on such a spectrum swap only in consultation with the telecom department since it was the sector regulator Trai that had originally recommended redistribution of efficient 800 MHz spectrum held by CDMA operators and substituting it with frequencies in the 1900 MHz band, when the permits of these companies come up for renewal after 10 years. At present, 300 units of airwaves between 1700 and 2000 MHz frequencies are shared equally between the telecom department and the armed forces. Any swap deal will need to keep this ratio intact.

38. MOTOROLA MOBILITY TO CUT ANOTHER 1,200 JOBS

Device maker Motorola Mobility is planning a fresh round of redundancies that will take the total number of staff cut to 5,200 in the past seven months. The firm plans to cut another 1,200 jobs in the US, China and India as part of its bid to return to profitability, the *Wall Street Journal* reports, citing an internal staff e-mail. The latest layoffs follow an announcement in August that 4,000 staff would be cut in a restructuring plan designed to reduce costs, a spokesperson explained. Motorola Mobility continues to post operating losses despite being bought by Google in 2011 for \$12.5 billion (€9.6 billion).

39. TELSTRA GETS CARRIER ETHERNET 2.0 CERT

Australia's Telstra Wholesale has become APAC's first operator to receive Carrier Ethernet 2.0 certification from the Metro Ethernet Forum (MEF). The operator announced it has received CE 2.0 certification for its Ethernet Access and Ethernet Backhaul products, which launched in August 2012. The certification covers class of service (CoS) and service operations, administration and maintenance (S-OAM). "We're very proud of becoming the first in the Asia Pacific region and only the second

company in the world to have our Carrier Ethernet products certified against such a stringent standard,” Telstra Wholesale general manager solutions Bryce Blacker said. MEF president Nan Chen said that so far 18 Telstra Group employees have received MEF Carrier Ethernet certified professional (CECP) accreditation. The MEF certified the first vendor products for the CE 2.0 standard in January. Vendors with products approved included Ciena, Cisco, Huawei, Infinera, Juniper Networks and Transmode.

40. DOT UNLIKELY TO EXTEND LICENCE TERM FOR INCUMBENT PLAYERS.

The Department of Telecom has sought more time to decide on whether or not to extend licenses of incumbent players, including Airtel and Vodafone, for another 10 years. The Supreme Court had directed the Department to take a view by March 7.

Some of the licenses issued to Airtel, Vodafone and Loop Mobile are set to expire in 2014.

Under the existing license conditions, the DoT can extend the time period for another 10 years. However, the Department had asked these operators to give up the spectrum allocated 20 years ago and buy it back through an auction.

The operators challenged this decision in the court on grounds that the current rules permit them to retain the license and spectrum for another 10 years. Vodafone had written to the DoT seeking extension of its licenses and the rights to continue to use the 900 MHz spectrum band. However, the DoT did not reply to this letter forcing the operator to file an appeal in the court.

According to senior DoT officials, the telecom companies may not be allowed to retain the license beyond 2014.

“The DoT has already taken a view that 900 MHz has to be refarmed. In addition, the existing license conditions state that the 10-year extension is at the discretion of the DoT. We will take a legal view before replying to the operator’s application,” said a DoT officer.

If the DoT gives an adverse ruling then the operators are likely to go back to the court. While directing the DoT to take a decision by March 7, the court had also told the operators that they can file an appeal if they think that the DoT decision is against their interest.

41. DOT FIRM TELCOS MUST OWN SPECTRUM TO OFFER 3G SERVICES.

BhartiAirtel, Vodafone India and Idea Cellular may have to stop offering 3G roaming in areas where they do not have spectrum by the end of the month.

The Department of Telecom has prepared a notice to this effect that is expected to be sent to the operators over the next few days.

The operators will also be asked to pay a penalty for violating the license condition by offering 3G services in places where they did not own spectrum.

This has huge implications for the three operators as they will lose their pan-India 3G footprint at a time when archrival Reliance JiInfocomm is gearing up to launch its data and voice services based on 4G technology across the country.

Soon after the spectrum auctions got over in 2010, BhartiAirtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular had entered into an agreement to offer 3G services to their subscribers across the country.

This was necessitated because none of these players had won pan-India spectrum individually. Therefore, they got into a deal which they termed as intra-circle roaming agreement.

The current license rules permit operators to go in for roaming agreements so that users get seamless coverage as they move from one circle to another. But in the case of 3G services, operators are selling connections even where they do not have spectrum. For example, in Madhya Pradesh neither BhartiAirtel nor Vodafone has 3G spectrum but both have subscribers. This has been made possible because the two operators have entered into an agreement with Idea Cellular.

However, the DoT has taken a view that this was not a roaming arrangement. "If the contention of the operators that they can sell full mobility services using the network of other operators by entering into so-called commercial roaming agreements is accepted, then it would tantamount to the position where the companies having the license to provide the mobile services will not establish any kind of network to provide the services and may not bid for spectrum during the auction process," stated a draft notice to be issued to Airtel.

"These licensees, by selling 3G services without having their own 3G spectrum, are working like Mobile Virtual Network Operator, which is not permitted and hence illegal," the note added.

The DoT had first issued a show-cause notice in September 2012 asking the mobile operators to explain why no action should be taken against them.

However, the operators challenged the DoT decision in court. The court asked the Department to take a decision after giving a hearing to the operators.

42. UNSOLD CDMA AIRWAVES MAY GO ON SALE AGAIN

The Indian arm of Russian conglomerate Sistema, which had bagged airwaves in eight regions in the auctions that concluded Monday, may get another chance to win spectrum in the remaining regions in the country.

The telecom department plans to put unsold CDMA spectrum in the remaining 14 regions on sale again in the third round of airwaves auctions that will be held shortly. But the plan will first have to be approved by the inter-ministerial panel on spectrum headed by finance minister P Chidambaram, a government official aware of the developments told ET.

43. SSTL REDUCES OPERATIONS TO 9 CIRCLES

Sistema Shyam TeleServices Ltd. , which operates in India under brand MTS has won airwaves in eight circles in the second round of recently concluded CDMA spectrum auction. MTS was the sole bidder in the auctions and paid INR 3,639 crore for the spectrum.

The circles won by MTS India include Delhi, Kolkata, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh (West) and West Bengal. The company's operational footprint to also include Rajasthan circle which was not affected by the license cancellation order by Supreme Court dated February 2, 2012.

The company had spectrum in 22 circles, out of which 21 licenses (excluding Rajasthan) were cancelled by Supreme Court in 2012. Later the company decided to shut its shop in 10 circles, leaving its operational presence in 12 circles.

However, it did not bid for frequencies in three regions -Mumbai, Maharashtra and UP (East), which is likely to impact around 13 percent of its overall customer base of over 12.1 million. Besides that, it will also impact 15 percent of its total workforce of 2,850 people."Full efforts are being made to absorb maximum number of employees in other circles. In-addition, care is being taken to place some of the employees in other Companies," the company said in a statement.

The spectrum won by SSTL will be valid for 20 years and is technology neutral, allowing MTS to offer 2G, 3G or even 4G services using same spectrum. MTS says that the spectrum win will help company to service 40 percent of country's population and address over 60 percent of data business potential.

44. ANDY RUBIN STEPS DOWN AS ANDROID CHIEF

Android head and chief evangelist Andy Rubin is stepping down from the role, Google has revealed. Rubin will be replaced by browser and applications chief Sundar Pichai, who will retain responsibility for Chrome and Google's apps operations, CEO Larry Page said in a blog post announcing the changeover. Page said the decision to leave was Rubin's, and that he will take up a new position at Google. "Having exceeded even the crazy ambitious goals we dreamed of for Android—and with a really strong leadership team in place—Andy's decided it's time to hand over the reins and start a new chapter at Google," Page said. "Andy, more moonshots please!" As of today, over 750 million Android devices have been activated worldwide, and 25 billion apps have been downloaded from Google Play, according to the chief executive.

45. MS CHALLENGING CISCO IN ENTERPRISE VOICE

Microsoft continues to increase its share of the enterprise voice and unified communications application markets, according to data from Synergy Research Group. The research firm finds that in the fourth quarter of 2012, Microsoft's share of the worldwide enterprise IP telephony market had risen to almost 3%, while its share of the UC applications market had reached almost 18%. Synergy said that while a 3% share may not seem like much of an impact, Microsoft's growth is being achieved in a mature

market which has been in decline. Last year, worldwide revenues for enterprise IP telephony fell by more than 6%, while Microsoft grew its revenue in the segment by more than 40%. In UC applications, the software giant is now the clear No. 2 in the market, distancing itself from third-ranked Avaya and closing the gap with market leader Cisco.

46. ZTE NAMES NEW INDIA CEO

ZTE named company veteran XuDejun as the new CEO of its Indian operations. Dejun joined ZTE in 2001, and has held roles including ZTE Africa's head of international projects, and ZTE India's head of technical sales. ZTE, which earned revenue of around \$700 million from its Indian operations in 2012, plans to double down its focus on its key customers in 2013, Xi said.

47. ALCATEL-LUCENT WINS MAJOR CONTRACT FROM TATACOMM

European equipment vendor, Alcatel-Lucent (NYSE: ALU) has procured a major deal from Tata Communications Ltd. (NYSE: TCL) spanning 51 countries for a period of three years.

As part of their modernization process, Tata Communications was looking at replacing its legacy equipment which would help them to bring down the OPEX. "Besides that they were also looking at offering more resilient performance to their enterprise customers," says a well placed industry source on condition of anonymity.

While the financial scope of the deal is unclear, it is safe to say that the deal will add considerable weight to Alcatel's portfolio.

Besides Alcatel Lucent, the company evaluated three other vendors, Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., Cisco Systems Inc. (Nasdaq: CSCO) and Juniper Networks Inc. (NYSE: JNPR).

"The selection of the vendor was a rigorous process spanning over nine months. The process also involved dialogue between Research and Development departments of the two companies. Tata's wanted to know the product roadmap in detail before taking a final call," adds the source.

An element of go-to-market might have also played out in this deal. Since Cisco, which was handling this business before Alcatel got the deal, is a prominent player in the enterprise segment and might have helped Tata Communications in getting additional business from their clients? This would definitely go against Alcatel since this player is not so strong in the enterprise space.

Alcatel is believed to have already installed the nodes in 10 countries including India. "There is a huge scope of expansion in this business and the deal is likely to be extended to other countries as well," says the industry source.

Mumbai based Tata Communications was founded as VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited) in 1986 and owns a submarine cable network, a Tier-1 IP network. It also operates one of the top largest data centers in Pune and has a cable network of more than 235,000 kilometers.

48. SHOW-CAUSE NOTICES TO 5 TELECOM FIRMS FOR UNDERSTATING REVENUES: GOVT

Government has sent show-cause notices to 5 telecom firms including Reliance Communications and Tata Teleservices for alleged understatement of revenues of over Rs 10,000 crore for financial years 2006-07 and 2007-08,

"Special audit of five major private telecom group companies including the Vodafone group has been conducted for the financial years 2006-07 and 2007-08," Deora added.

The government has sent show cause notices to Reliance for revenue under stated of Rs 3,402.92 crore, Tata Teleservices (Rs 3,156.46 crore), BhartiAirtel (Rs 1,927.50 crore), Vodafone (Rs 1,490.94 crore) and Idea(Rs 848.87 crore),

The total amount of revenue under stated is Rs 10,826.69 crore and the total license fee demand raised, which also includes interest is Rs 1,841.67 crore from these telecom companies, it added.

"The government has sent show cause notice/demand notice to all the aforesaid licensees. The notices include interest as per the terms and conditions of the license agreement. The demands raised on account of special audit have been stayed by Kerala High Court/TDSAT/Chennai High Court," Deora said.

49. DELHI HIGH COURT STAYS DOT'S RULE ON INTRA-CIRCLE 3G ROAM PACT.

The Delhi High Court today stayed the Centre's move to prohibit mobile service providers from entering into roaming agreements with other operators for the 3G network.

The telecom department had introduced a clause in the letter of intent (LoI) under which it was specified that as per the unified license, using 3G spectrum of another operator was not permitted.

Issuing notice to the Department of Telecommunications (DOT), Justice Rajiv Shakhder sought the ministry's response within four weeks and stayed the clause 6 of the LoI. The court passed the order on Idea Cellular's plea challenging the government's move for seven circles where it bought 2G spectrum.

50. COAI, DOT DIFFER ON SC DECISION

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), the industry body representing the likes of Bharti, Vodafone and Idea, among others, on Wednesday claimed the Supreme Court had upheld its stand that 19 GSM mobile permits issued to Tata's in 2008 should also be quashed along with the 122 licenses that were scrapped last year. But telecom department officials rejected the COAI stance and said the apex court had only said it was satisfied with its earlier order, 'implying that only the 122 permits dished

out by former telecom minister A Raja had been quashed'. The contradictory interpretations came after the Supreme Court disposed the plea from COAI stating that 19 permits that were granted to Tata's should also be added to the 122 licenses that cancelled last year. While disposing their plea, the apex court asked the government, to auction all airwaves vacated by the quashed permits. The COAI, in its petition had said that the total airwaves that was to be put up for sale from 141 quashed permits (including 19 permits from the Tata's) amounts to 514.8 MHz.

51. VIDEOCON TO SET UP A CALL CENTRE AT BHARUCH, ADD 1,800 TOWERS

Mobile Telephony service provider Videocon Mobile Services will start a call Centre at Bharuch, double its stores to 100 in Gujarat and set up additional 1,800 telecom towers in a couple of months, said top company official. It is looking to double its lost customer base by the end of the year.

"We have a 400 acre facility at at Bharuch. It has good power back up and transportation facilities. Now tier 2 and tier 3 cities are preferred for call centers because of the cost advantage and low attrition levels," Videocon Mobile Services director and CEO, Arvind Bali told media persons in the city on Wednesday. The 1,000 seat capacity centre, likely to start operations in April this year, can employ a total of 2,000 persons in two shifts.

52. VIDEOCON TO ROLL OUT 4G SERVICES IN SIX CIRCLES BY YEAR-END

Videocon Telecommunication today said it will roll out long term evolution (LTE) technology for offering 4G services in six circles, including Gujarat and Bihar, by this year end.

"LTE technology offering better speed and connectivity to consumers will in first phase shall be rolled out in six circles of Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, UP-East, UP-West and Bihar by this year end," Videocon Technologies Director & CEO Arvind Bali told reporters.

53. RELIANCE GLOBALCOM UPGRADES UNDERSEA CABLE SYSTEM

Reliance Globalcom, an arm of Reliance Communications, today said it has upgraded the capacity of its system that will address the growing global bandwidth demand for cloud computing, video and other high-bandwidth services.

The company has upgraded its Trans-Atlantic FA-1 South submarine network with Ciena Corporation's GeoMesh solution, which will serve New York to Paris trans-Atlantic corridor.

"Ciena's unique GeoMesh solution enables us to quickly and significantly increase the information carrying capacity across our critical FA-1 submarine cable network while eliminating complexity and latency along the critical corridor serving data centers in New York and Paris," Reliance Globalcom President and CEO Punit Garg said in a statement.

54. GSM MOBILE USER BASE DOWN TO 655.59 MN IN FEBRUARY

The country's GSM mobile subscriber base fell by 1.97 million in February to 655.59 million, dragged down by Uninor that lost over 8 million users, data released by industry body COAI shows.

The subscriber count stood at 657.56 million at the end of January 2013. Uninor lost 8.34 million subscribers during February and its user base now stands at 31.77 million. Uninor has closed down its operations in various circles, including Mumbai, and the company now provides services in six circles. "The loss of subscription in February also reflects the scale Uninor was able to build within three years in the circles it was compelled to close down," Uninor said in a statement.

"In the six circles where Uninor operations are continuing, the company has added 1.2 lakh new subscribers in February," it added.

55. BATELCOIN TALKS WITH RCOM FOR SECOND INNINGS

Fresh reports have indicated that Bahrain Telecommunications Co. (Batelco) is in close talks with Reliance Communications Ltd. in a bid to re-enter India market. According to several reports in media, the company is in talks to buy a stake in RCom's enterprise business unit Globalcom.

Reliance has confirmed the development. "We note recent reports in the press and confirm that we are in discussions with Batelco Group with respect to Reliance Globalcom, our global communications services business unit. At this point, there can be no certainty that this will lead to a transaction. A further announcement will be made in due course if appropriate," the company says in a statement.

In its first stint, Batelco was the foreign partner in S Tel Pvt. Ltd., which saw the cancellation of all its licenses in February last year. S Tel had 2G licenses in six circles and 3G spectrum in three circles, but decided to exit India after the cancellation of all its licenses. There were also rumors in the industry of the Batelco valuing Reliance Globalcom at \$1.3 billion.

Reliance Globalcom provides communication services to 2100 enterprises, 200 carriers and 2.5 million retail customers in 163 countries across 6 continents. It also owns one of the largest private undersea cable system spanning 65,000 kms.

56. BHARTIAIRTEL MAY ASK HUAWEI TO HANDLE 4G ROLLOUTS IN DELHI, MUMBAI

India's top telecom company BhartiAirtel is likely to ask China's Huawei to handle 4G network rollouts in the country's biggest data markets of Delhi and Mumbai, which were among the four regions where it acquired US chipmaker Qualcomm's wireless broadband permits last year, executives aware of the matter said.

Huawei may initially supply 6,000-odd base stations (BTSs) for the first wave of Airtel's high-speed wireless data services rollouts in Delhi and Mumbai. At current prices of roughly \$25,000 or Rs 13.5 lakh per base station, the initial cost of rolling out 4G networks in both metros would be \$150 million (Rs 810 crore approximately). The final deal size could run in excess of \$200 million (Rs 1,100 crore approximately) if Huawei is also asked to manage these networks.

This will be Airtel's first 4G network deal announcement after Gopal Vittal took charge as chief executive. Bharti was the first Indian telco to launch fourth-generation services about a year ago and it had announced plans to widen its 4G footprint to 8 telecom zones after it acquired 49% in Qualcomm's wireless broadband entities in Delhi, Mumbai, Haryana and Kerala for Rs 924 crore. It had earlier shelled out Rs 3,314.36 crore for wireless broadband airwaves in Kolkata, Karnataka, Punjab and Maharashtra. BhartiAirtel did not reply to ET's specific queries on whether it is buying gear from Huawei for expanding its 4G footprint to the country's biggest telecom zones. The Chinese vendor also did not respond to ET's email query on deal size and tenure. A top executive close to the talks, however, said Bharti and Huawei were broadening their 4G engagement.

Huawei has supplied 4G networks and devices like dongles and customer premise equipment (CPE) to Airtel in Bangalore, and is likely to do the same in Delhi and Mumbai. Both companies have conducted trails of Huawei's Ascend P1 LTE smartphone, which is the first TD-LTE compatible 4G handset in India, although Airtel did not comment on whether it had finalized its pricing.

"Airtel has not placed purchase orders for 4G gear for potential Delhi and Mumbai rollouts as it is yet to take a call on whether it will have adequate customers to justify a fresh Rs 800 crore investment, given the poor traction of 4G in India in the absence of devices ecosystem and high data tariffs," said another executive who did not wish to be named.

Sector analysts claim investments in a greenfield rollout will be high since 4G airwaves in the 2300 MHz band offer limited coverage unlike frequencies in the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz or 700 MHz bands that more efficient and offer wider coverage. Till date, Bharti has launched 4G services only in Bangalore, Kolkata and Pune and has some 40,000-odd customers, although the company did not confirm this. There is no decision yet to immediately launch in Haryana or Kerala. "4G hasn't taken off since device and data tariffs remain high and Airtel is unlikely to see serious traction unless it launches in Delhi and Mumbai," says Ovum's principal telecoms analyst (consumer services), Shiv Putcha. Putcha expects Airtel to cherry pick launch zones as "its 4G spectrum holdings in key circles are largely strategic acquisitions, especially since India is not ready for 4G as we neither have the relevant content, the devices or the demand to drive wireless broadband services penetration".

57. BHARTI TOLD TO STOP 3G SERVICES IN 7 CIRCLES, SLAPPED RS 350 CROREFINE

The government has ordered BhartiAirtel, the country's largest mobile phone company, to stop providing third-generation (3G) services in Kolkata, Maharashtra, Gujarat and four other regions by Monday, as it cracks the whip on companies offering these

services in areas where they do not have permits. Bharti moved the Delhi High Court on Friday against the telecom department (DoT) directive, and the court will hear the case on Monday. DoT has also slapped a 350-crore penalty on the company for offering high-end data services in seven regions where it does not have 3G frequencies. A government department official confirmed that similar bans, including penalties, would be slapped on Vodafone and Idea Cellular too, but declined to specify the time frame.

58. DOT ASKS CDMA PLAYERS TO PAY RS 3,000 CR AS ONE-TIME SPECTRUM FEE.

The government has asked CDMA telecom operators to pay one-time fee, amounting to about Rs 3,033 crore, for the spectrum they hold beyond the initial frequencies that were allocated to them.

In its order on levy of one time spectrum charges for CDMA spectrum held by the incumbent telecom service providers, Department of Telecom (DoT) has said: "For CDMA spectrum holding above 2.5 MHz in 800 MHz band, the rate for one-time spectrum charges shall be applicable from 01-01-2013."

According to the order, the charges will be levied on additional spectrum for the rest of the licence period and operators not willing to pay these charges will be allowed to surrender their spectrum held over 2.5 MHz DoT has issued rates to be charged annually for each megahertz of frequencies, based on the reserve price that was fixed for spectrum auction held on March 11.

Official sources said one time spectrum fee on all CDMA players cumulatively amounts to around Rs 3,033 crore.

Telecom operators will have an option to pay these charges in equal annual installments in a manner that the last one ends one year before their licenses expire.

Reliance Communications, Tata Teleservices, Sistema Shyam (SSTL), BSNL and MTNL hold spectrum beyond 2.5 Megahertz (MHz) in a few telecom service areas.

59. AIRCEL AIN'T IN HURRY FOR 4G ROLL-OUTS

In contrast with BhartiAirtel Ltd., which has already launched 4G services in the country, GSM service provider, Aircel Ltd. is taking a precautionary approach and is in no hurry to roll out its 4G network.

Aircel's Chief Marketing Officer Anupam Vasudev says that the company's 4G roll-outs may take longer time than what they had anticipated, since the ecosystem is not yet ready.

Anupam Vasudev said, "3G services were rolled-out two years back and still the 3G penetration is only 6 percent. On the other hand, the 4G ecosystem too has not evolved yet completely and Aircel's 4G roll-outs may take much longer time than what we had earlier anticipated."

Aircel has BWA spectrum in eight circles and 3G spectrum in 13 circles. Aircel possesses 4G spectrum in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu (including Chennai), West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, North-East, and Jammu & Kashmir. "It is also about consumer habits... if a consumer is only interested in emailing and social networking, then he/she would not need 4G for that, whereas for watching HD videos the consumer would require 4G service. There is also a need for the consumer to move in that direction, in which demand kind of coming in and consumers start feeling comfortable using high-speed services on their phones. We will have to see, how the ecosystem will evolve, since it is difficult to predict in the world of technology," says Vasudev. Aircel is expected to roll out 4G services in the current year; however, there is no confirmation over the exact launch date.

According to Vasudev, device ecosystem is one of the issues hampering 4G growth. He says that availability and pricing of devices will be crucial for the 4G growth in the country. The company has invested \$9 billion for services in the country.

Vasudev believes that unavailability of content in different Indian languages is also a barrier for mobile data growth. "Most of the content available over the internet is in English, and that cuts of telcos from nearly 80 percent of the market. So, the ecosystem has to come in the picture now."

He believes that video will be the main growth driver for data services in the country.

60. HC ALLOWS BHARATIARTEL TO CONTINUE WITH 3G FACILITY

The Delhi High Court on Monday stalled the fine of Rs 350 crore on BhartiAirtel for offering third-generation (3G) services in circles where it did not have licenses, till next date of hearing on May 8.

The court allowed the country's largest mobile phone company by subscribers and revenue to continue offering 3G services in Haryana, Kolkata, Uttar Pradesh East, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh, till the matter is heard again.

Bharti moved the Delhi High Court on Friday against the DoT directive that ordered the telco to stop providing 3G services in seven regions within three days. It also slapped a fine of Rs 50 crore for every region where 3G services were being offered in a pact with other operators. However, the court asked BhartiAirtel to keep revenue generated from these services in a separate bank account and submit 3G revenue details to the court. The high court also told the carrier to sign an affidavit saying that the government can be allowed to cash the bank guarantee if Airtel loses the case.

61. GALAXY S4 COSTS AROUND \$240 TO MAKE

Samsung's latest flagship Galaxy smartphone costs roughly \$30 more to make than its predecessor, according to a tear down by IHS iSuppli.

The research firm estimates that the HSPA+ version of the Galaxy S4 costs around \$244 in parts and manufacturing costs. This is 15% or \$30.40 higher than the estimated cost of the Galaxy SIII.

“Although its hardware is not radically different from the Galaxy S III introduced in April of 2012, the Samsung Galaxy S4 includes some critical component updates that enhance its functionality as well as its BOM cost,” IHS senior analyst for cost benchmarking Vincent Leung said.

These include a full-HD AMOLED screen, compared to the 1,280x720 resolution of the SIII. The extra \$10 cost of the display and touch screen is the single largest contributor to the increased price, he said.

The cost per unit of the eight-core processor has also increased significantly, as has the user interface and sensor subsystem.

Curiously, IHS also estimates that the LTE version of the device costs less to make than the HSPA+ version, at \$233.

This is due to Samsung's decision to use a Qualcomm Snapdragon 600 chip, which uses a lower-cost wireless LAN/Bluetooth/FM/GPS subsystem.

62. A.SETHURAMAN QUILS HUAWEI.

Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. 's Executive Director, A. Sethuraman has resigned from the company. The sources close to the developments have confirmed the news, adding that he has been serving the notice period for quite some time.

When contacted though, Sethuraman was reluctant to speak and termed the development as a speculation.

Sethuraman had joined Huawei in year 2009 as a Head of Technical Sales for all products and solutions in India for Huawei and has also held key strategic positions at Alcatel-Lucent (NYSE: ALU) in his earlier roles.

It is not clear where Sethuraman is heading towards and if Huawei will have an Indian or Chinese executive replacement to fill his shoes.

63. NOKIA'S TRUMP CARD: AFFORDABLE LUMIA DEVICES

The ailing Finnish handset manufacturer Nokia has constantly been making efforts to revive its declining market share in the country. The company's latest move is to bring affordability to masses with its enhanced Lumia smartphone portfolio.

The company has launched the cheapest Windows Phone 8 smartphone—520 in India for INR 10,500 (\$193) to reach out to masses and revitalize its market share in the smartphone segment. The company has recently made available Lumia 620, another Windows Phone 8 smartphone under INR 15,000.

Vipul Mehrotra, Director and Head of Smart Devices at Nokia told *Light Reading India*, “Lumia caters to high-end segment, but we have brought it down to INR 10,000 price point. Although our strategy would revolve around providing experience to consumers instead of going aggressively over pricing.”

On strategy in the country, Mehrotra added, "We will bring more experiences and partnerships as per our strategy for the Indian market. You will get to see more partnerships in terms of customer support, EMI and Insurance among others." (See Nokia Bundles Insurance with Device Purchases.)

The company has also rolled-out another high-end Windows Phone 8 smartphone—Lumia 720, which is expected to be priced around \$322 excluding taxes and will be available in the market mid-April.

In a bid to bolster sales, Nokia has recently slashed prices of some of its older generation Lumia smartphones, including Lumia 710.

Nokia's revenues from India operations declined 23 percent to \$2.86 billion in 2012, as compared to \$3.77 billion revenue in 2011.

Mehrotra believes that decline in revenues was due to the transition period and low number of smartphones in the country. "Now, we have a broader range of smartphones in the country at various price points. We hope to get more market share in Indian mobile phone market with this expanded Lumia range," he added.

64. TRAI FOR ADOPTION OF FDD TECHNOLOGY FOR PREMIUM 4G SERVICES

Telecom regulator TRAI on Tuesday recommended that the government adopt FDD technology for 700 MHz band, considered a premium spectrum band, for 4G services. Some Indian operators have launched 4G services using the LTE-TDD, while in other parts of the world FDD-LTE is the predominant technology for 4G services. Experts had said both LTE-TDD and FDD are only variants. "...authority recommends that APT700 band plan should be adopted for the 700 MHz spectrum band (698-806 MHz) with FDD based 2x45 MHz frequency arrangement," Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said. The regulator had evaluated suggestions from various interested parties.

65. VODAFONE INDIA SWITCHES OFF AC AT TOWERS TO CUT ENERGY COSTS, AND CARBON EMISSIONS

Vodafone India is switching off the air-conditioning and improving ventilation at its telecom towers to cut energy consumption costs and carbon emission. The change, which is a work in progress, saves nearly a quarter of the energy consumed at each site, but comes with some capital expenditure to increase ventilation at these locations, a company spokesman said in an email.

These are not specially designed base stations but have been in use for years. The discovery that they can run without air-conditioning is new. "These stations were set up with air cons because at that time it was the way all telecom equipment was set up by everyone," said a company executive, who did not want to be named. The conversion to a more energy efficient model requires some capital expenditure on aligning windows and creating vents, but once done the base stations at the towers will require no artificial cooling. Vodafone has already implemented the change at 10% of the towers, said the company statement.

66. TELCOM OPERATORS SEEK SOPS FOR MEETING GREEN TARGETS TO POWER CELLULAR TOWERS

Telecom operators have told the government that they will not be able to achieve the 2015 target for using renewable energy to power cellular towers unless they are provided subsidy or viability funding.

At an inter-ministerial meeting with the telecom department, the operators said it would cost about Rs33,000 crore to comply with the directive to run 50% of towers in rural areas and 20% in urban areas on hybrid power by 2015. According to the telecom department, this combination of renewable energy and grid power will help reduce carbon emission by at least 8% compared with the base year of 2011. A member of the Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association, who attended the meeting said the operators called the cost of harnessing green power prohibitive.

"This process will require government incentives during the gestation period until economies of scale are achieved that bring down the industry's capital expenditure to shift to renewable energy," said Umang Das, director of the association and chief mentor of Viom Networks.

Das added that as per the industry's estimates the government needs to provide subsidies worth Rs2, 000 crore said in a report last year that telecom towers running on diesel spewed out nearly 10 million tonne of carbon emissions. Each of the 4 lakh towers consumed an average of 8,760 liters of diesel every year, assuming that diesel generator sets powered the to renewable energy companies gearing up for generating clean energy for the telecom sector. Just 4,000 of the 400,000 telecom towers in the country run on hybrid power solution of diesel with solar back-up facility, the association said. Telecom regulator Trai had said in a report last year that telecom towers running on diesel spewed out nearly 10 million tonne of carbon emissions. Each of the 4 lakh towers consumed an average of 8,760 liters of diesel every year, assuming that diesel generator sets powered the towers for at least eight hours a day. Thereafter, the regulator recommended the green telecommunications programme, which was accepted by the government.

In a pilot project, done jointly with the ministry of new and renewable energy in 2011 by BSNL, Airtel, Indus Towers and GTL, solar power systems were installed at 100 towers of each operator. But there hasn't been any major progress apart from the pilot programme. While the state-run BSNL has shrugged off the directive as "commercially unviable", private players such as Vodafone and Bharti Infratel have tried to do some significant work in this direction.

67. AIRTEL LAUNCHES 4G SERVICES IN CHANDIGARH, MOHALI AND PANCHKULA

Telecom major BhartiAirtel launched the fourth generation (4G) mobile broadband services in Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula.

"This launch is another first by Airtel that further enhances the footprint of mobile broadband in India. We are optimistic about the potential of Airtel 4G services and invite our data savvy customers in Punjab to enjoy this world class data experience," BhartiAirtel CTO and Director for Network Services Group, Jagbir Singh said in a statement.

68. GOVERNMENT ORDERS REMOVAL OF ILLEGAL MOBILE TOWERS IN PATNA

Taking into account adverse health effects, the Bihar government today ordered removal of 784 communication towers of different mobile companies located within 100 meter radius of residential, hospital and school areas in the state capital. In reply to a question of BJP's Baidyanath Prasad in the Legislative Council, Urban Development Minister Prem Kumar said he has given directives to Commissioner of Patna Municipal Corporation to remove all 784 mobile towers from four circles of the state capital as they are health hazards.

The minister further said the large number of mobile towers are not registered under Bihar Communication Towers and Related Structures Rules 2012 and are illegally functioning in the residential areas. The minister warned that those failing to get registered by the communication rules would be dealt with severely.

69. TELCOS NEED TO INVEST RS 2.5 LAKH CR TO MEET POLICY GOALS

The telecom sector needs about Rs 2.30 lakh crore investment for meeting the target of 100 per cent connectivity in rural areas and 60 crore broadband connections as envisaged in the National Telecom Policy, E&Y has said.

"Cumulative capex is estimated to be Rs 2,50,000 crore for 2013-20, by telecom operators to meet next level of growth, which can be utilized only by increasing rural tele-density, indigenous manufacturing and providing broadband connections to achieve 60 crore subscribers by 2020," Ernst and Young said at an Assocham event here yesterday.

To achieve 100 per cent tele-density by 2020 in rural areas, telecom operators will need to add 52 lakh subscribers a month which will involve investment of Rs 80,000 crore to Rs 90,000 crore, E&Y. To meet broadband target as per the policy, telecom service providers will have to add 54 lakh broadband connections per month, it said, adding that this will involve capex of Rs 1,30,000 crore to Rs 1,40,000 crore by 2020.

70. DOT WANTS RS 2,764 CR MORE FROM 9 TELCOS INCLUDING IDEA, TATA TELESERVICES, AND ETISALAT

The nine mobile phone companies whose permits were quashed by the apex court in February 2012 are in for a shocker. The telecom department (DoT) wants them to cough up an additional Rs 2,764.3 crore towards a one-time charge for airwaves they had held. The DoT's logic: since the mobile permits of these companies were valid till February 15, 2013, the department is of the opinion that they used these frequencies for about five years from 2008 onwards.

In December 2012, the Cabinet had approved the recommendation of a panel of ministers to impose a one-time fee on mobile phone companies, both prospectively and retrospectively, for the airwaves they currently hold. This charge came into effect from January 1, and all leading companies have challenged this fee in court.

DoT is of the view that the retrospective component of this charge applies to the nine companies whose permits were quashed. Etisalat will take the biggest hit as it will have to shell out Rs605 crore followed by Telenor and Videocon, who will have to pay over Rs500 crore each. Sistema Shyam and Loop Telecom, in turn, will have to shell out roughly Rs463 crore and Rs390 crore, respectively. "The one-time charges from February 2, 2012, to February 15, 2013 have been calculated for spectrum allocated on pro-rata basis based on the approved reserve price of airwaves in 1800 MHz and 800 MHz band auctioned last November," says an internal telecom department note.

71. VIDEOCON WILL OFFER SERVICES AT 25% BELOW CURRENT MARKET RATES, ANALYSTS FEAR ANOTHER PRICE WAR

Mobile operator Videocon, which won back airwaves in six regions in the November spectrum auctions, will offer voice and data services at about 25% below current market rates, its chief executive and director, Arvind Bali, told ET.

The Gurgaon-headquartered company's move could trigger yet another tariff war in India's mobile telephony space, similar to those of 2009-10 when new entrants destroyed the industry's pricing power and sent its profits plunging. Videocon's plan also comes at a time when mobile tariffs have troughed; operators are rationalizing discounted minutes and gradually increasing call rates. On whether the company's strategy could destabilize the domestic industry, Bali said the group's traditional strength in sectors such as consumer durables was its pricing power. "We have to play to our strength."

Videocon has also decided against outsourcing the management and maintenance of its networks to equipment vendors, a practice generally followed by leading mobile phone companies in the country. Bali said executing these functions in-house would be more economical.

72. CHINA TELECOM PREFERS FDD FOR LTE

Announcing its financial results on Wednesday, China Telecom also revealed that it favors FDD technology for its future LTE network.

Chairman and CEO Wang Xiaochu declined to comment when the Chinese government would issue the licenses for commercial 4G services, but said China Telecom would prefer to choose wider deployed FDD-LTE technology over TD-LTE for 4G.

"The investment cost on TD-LTE is much higher than that on FDD-LTE," he said.

Wang said China Telecom intends to rent the TD-LTE network from China Mobile if the company were asked to deploy the Beijing-backed 4G technology.

“We’ve been discussing with the regulator about this [renting TD-LTE from China Mobile] but it’s still in early stage,” he noted.

His comment threw cold water on market expectations that China’s three major carriers will all deploy the TD-LTE technology.

To accelerate the commercialization of TD-LTE, the Ministry of Industry and Information announced earlier this year that it has set aside a bulk of 190MHz spectrum on the 2500MHz-2690MHz frequency band for TD-LTE deployment. This led to wide speculations that both China Unicom and China Telecom will also operate 4G service on TD-LTE technology.

China Mobile announced earlier this week that it would pour 41.5 billion yuan on building “commercial-ready” TD-LTE networks, as the company prepares for the rollout of the 4G services.

Wang said China Telecom plans to focus on deploying LTE to major cities first once it starts rolling out its network.

73. CHINA UNICOM TAKES FIRM STANCE ON FDD LTE

China Unicom has asserted that it will choose FDD technology over TDD for its future LTE network, and plans an initial investment of up to 10 billion Yuan (\$1.6 billion) to roll out its 4G network.

Chairman and CEO Chang Xiaoping said the company will “actively prepare” for the pending issuance of 4G licenses and prefers to adopt a technology roadmap that best fit its business strategy and current network, i.e. Migrating from W-CDMA to FDD LTE.

“The future 4G networks must allow us to have a very smooth migration from [our] current 3G network, and we will be standing very firm with this direction,” Chang said at a media briefing on Thursday.

An official from the Ministry of Industry and Information has indicated earlier that China will give out 4G licenses by year-end. While there are speculations that the government may issue Unicom a license for TD-LTE, Chang said “there has been no message or pressures from the regulator [requiring Unicom] to adopt the TD-LTE technology.”

Chang’s comment comes a day after China Telecom stated it prefers FDD standard for its future 4G network.

74. NSN LIKELY TO BE NEXT VENDOR JV BREAK-UP

Days after the announcement of the break-up of joint venture ST-Ericsson, Siemens has revealed that it will likely exit Nokia Siemens Networks this year.

Siemens CFO Joe Kaeser has revealed that the company has no ambition to remain part of the telecom equipment joint venture with Nokia, *Dow Jones Newswires* reported.

He said at an investor event that he believes that “2013 is the time for Siemens to help NSN to move into a better place.”

A shareholder pact prohibiting the parents from disposing of their stakes in the joint venture expires in April.

Nokia Siemens has been a financial drain on its parent companies' bottom lines since its founding in 2007, but Kaeser said the company's recent turnaround efforts – including job cuts and the divestiture of its BSS unit and its optical business – had enabled the company to start operating profitably.

75. GOVERNMENT SENT 102 NOTICES RELATING TO HIGH MOBILE TOWER RADIATION

Show cause notices were issued to various companies by the government in 102 cases where mobile phone base station emissions were discovered to be higher than the prescribed radiation limit, Parliament was informed today. The Department of Telecom (DoT) has initiated strict monitoring and enforcement of norms and in cases where excess radiation was discovered, corrective action has been taken immediately, Minister of State for Communications and IT Milind Deora said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

76. DOT REFUSES TO EXTEND LICENCES OF VODAFONE, AIRTEL; ASKS TELCOS TO PARTICIPATE IN SPECTRUM AUCTIONS

In a major setback to Vodafone India, the telecom has denied its request for extension of licenses in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata that are coming up for renewal in late 2014. A top communications ministry official said a similar request from BhartiAirtel has been rejected as well.

In a communication to Vodafone, accessed by ET, the telecom department (DoT) has said under the new policy on spectrum allocation, airwaves have been delinked from license. Therefore, the firm must participate in the auctions to be held later this year to access airwaves at market price.

"Unless you participate in auctions and get your bid confirmed, you would not be entitled to wireless license, which is a requisite," DoT said. It added that Vodafone was given a chance to participate in auctions, concluded early this month, but it stayed away.

"In the circumstances, we find no reason to grant you an extension contemplated by Clause 4.1. It is also not expedient to do so as there is no inclination shown by you to come to settle new terms and conditions in pursuance of and in conformities of the extant policies...Consequently, your request for an extension for 10 years on the same terms and conditions stands rejected," the DoT notice said.

77. DOCOMO TO FIELD-TEST SOLAR BASE STATIONS

Japan's NTT DoCoMo has announced plans to start field testing three solar-powered base stations from next month.

The operator said it had developed the solar base stations as part of efforts to develop disaster-proof base stations in the wake of the devastating earthquake and tsunami during March 2011.

The disaster led to rolling blackouts across Japan, causing outages and stressed networks for the nation's operators. At the peak of the disruption, DoCoMo had reported that 6,720 of its base stations were rendered inoperative.

The solar base stations have been in testing at DoCoMo's R&D facility since March 2012, and the plan has been in the works since at least mid-2011.

Each BTS will be equipped with solar panels, rechargeable batteries and green power controllers.

If the base station is disconnected from commercial power supply, it can use the solar cells to provide power during the day, and store up to 16 hours of power to use when this isn't available.

DoCoMo said the design will also allow it to purchase power for the base station at night time, when costs are relatively cheaper, and use it to augment photovoltaic power generation on cloudy days.

DoCoMo plans to deploy 10 disaster-proof facilities by late summer. The company is also evaluating adding wind-powered base stations and fuel cell technologies to the green development program.

78. CHINA COULD APPROVE FIRST MVNOS FROM MAY

China's ICT ministry could approve applications from several local companies to operate as MVNOs by as early as May, as part of its plan to open the nation's telecom sector to more private investment.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) has told Chinese media that it will give the green light as soon as May, *Shanghai Daily* said.

Software Company Ufina and home appliance retailer Suning have submitted applications, and industry sources expect internet giants such as Alibaba and Tencent to also apply, according to the report.

Prospective applicants must have telecom experience and employ at least 50 people.

MIIT announced in January that it is considering conducting a two-year pilot whereby private companies can apply to become MVNOs.

The move was hailed as the early stages of opening up China's huge telecom sector to private investment, including potentially to foreign players – although the MIIT has stipulated that only domestic companies can apply for an MVNO license.

Per the proposal, China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom will be required to reach reseller agreements with at least two MVNOs each, and must offer access to their networks at a fair price.

79. ZTE REPORTS FIRST EVER ANNUAL LOSS

Chinese vendor ZTE swung to a debut annual loss of 2.84 billion yuan (\$457 million) in 2012, as network project delays and falling overseas revenue impacted its bottom line.

The company reported a 2.4% decline in annual revenue to 84.2 billion yuan. While domestic income was stable, revenue from overseas operations fell 4.5%.

ZTE also blamed the annual loss on falling in feature phone sales, delays in some network contracts and a drop in gross profit margin as the company pursued lower-margin contracts in China, Africa and South America.

But ZTE also reported a positive cash flow for the first time in three years. Operating cash flow for the year was 1.87 billion yuan.

80. GOVT HAS NOTHING TO SAY ON COURT ORDER ON AIRTEL CHIEF: KAPILSIBAL

Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal today said that government has nothing to say on the order of a Delhi court which has summoned telecom major Airtel's chief Sunil Bharti Mittal, among others, as an accused in a spectrum allocation case during the earlier NDA regime.

"The CBI chose not to consider him (Mittal) as an accused. The court has summoned him (as an accused), there is nothing that we can say. If there are any consequences, that have nothing to do with the government," Sibal said when asked about his view as Telecom Minister on the matter.

Besides Mittal, Special CBI Judge O P Saini also summoned Essar Group Promoter Ravi Ruia, who was then a Director in one of the accused company Sterling Cellular Ltd and is already facing trial in another case arising out of the probe into the 2G spectrum allocation case, and Asim Ghosh, the then Managing Director of accused firm Hutchison Max Telecom Pvt Ltd.

The companies have denied having any kind of involvement in the wrong doing by their officials named in the order.

81. UNIFIED LICENCE FRAMEWORK TO TAKE A MONTH: TELECOM SECRETARY.

Government will finalize within a month the framework for unified licensing (UL) that will enable users to get a host of services such as mobile, landline, DTH and cable TV from a single company without the entity necessarily owning the full infrastructure. The regime will be finalized after considering all the legal options, Telecom Secretary R Chandrasekhar said today.

"UL documents need legal vetting. It should take around one month," Chandrasekhar told reporters here. Once the UL framework comes into force, telecom companies holding the license will be able to provide all services that existing licenses permit as well as share spectrum and other active part of telecom infrastructure that were not permitted earlier.

Telecom service providers who want to provide any additional service apart from current offerings will have to go for unified license. In case of merger and acquisitions also, companies need to go for unified license. When asked if telecom auction can be conducted in April, he said, "It may take some more time." Last week, Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal had said the government is likely to finalize the framework for UL in 8-10 days.

"It's (UL) been cleared and now we are in the process of finalizing it, we than send it to the Ministry of Law and hopefully we should have a decision in eight-ten days," Sibal had said during the National Editors Conference here.

"The regime has changed. Today the license and spectrum are two separate things, previously the spectrum was with the license at a cost of Rs 1,658 crore, today they are separate ... all the operators have to migrate to UL," Sibal had said. The concept of unified license is that players are free to provide all telecom services with one license. However, these licenses will not have spectrum bundled with them.

82. PRE-PAID MOBILE PHONE SERVICE EXTENDED IN J&K, NORTH EAST

The government today extended the pre-paid mobile services in Jammu and Kashmir and Northeast by another two years as the current permission was coming to an end on March 31, 2013.

According to a Department of Telecom notification, the pre-paid service in Jammu and Kashmir and Northeast has been extended upto March 31, 2015. The extension of services by DoT was done after seeking an approval of the Committee of Secretaries as the services were coming to an end on March 31, 2013. The decision to extend it by two more years was taken after the security situation in these states was reviewed and no major fault of misuse of mobile telephony came to notice.

The department had issued an order to stop pre-paid mobile services in these three service areas in 2009 due to security reasons.

83. DOT WORKING ON SPECTRUM ALLOCATION POLICY AT AUCTION PRICE

The government is examining whether telecom spectrum can be allocated administratively at the price that was discovered through auction, a process which was stopped following the Supreme Court verdict in the 2G spectrum case.

"A decision has to be taken whether that auction price can be applied administratively and in what circumstances. Those are issues on which a proper policy is in process of being formulated. Then it will also have to be taken to competent authority for approval," Telecom R Chandrasekhar told PTI today, his last day in office. He said the Supreme Court ruling of February 2, 2012 and its reply to Presidential Reference has brought clarity with respect to allocation of spectrum, and on that basis an internal committee of Department of Telecom is working out details for spectrum allocation.

The Supreme Court judgment had asked the government to allocate spectrum through auction but in its reply to the Presidential Reference, the apex court had clarified that the order was with respect to the spectrum allocation made in January 2008 only. "It is clear that all types of spectrum cannot be auctioned because there are many kind of spectrum apart from access spectrum for use of VSAT or spectrum for point to point, closed user group, on... There has to be policy on those kind of allocation," Chandrasekhar said.

The Telecom Secretary said that there is an existing process that was being followed for allocation of spectrum which will need to be reviewed in the light of access spectrum (that is allocated for mobile telephony).

"Even with regard to this (access) spectrum which is being priced through a auction process...It has to be examined as to what circumstances it can be done. The price has to be set through auction," Chandrasekhar said.

84. DOT SEEKS CABINET NOD FOR MORE POWER TO TRAI

The communications ministry will soon seek approval from the Union Cabinet for granting more powers to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) and enabling the watchdog to act like a civil court.

The move will bring the telecom regulator on equal footing with other supervisory bodies such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Competition Commission of India and allow it to penalize mobile phone companies. The telecom department, in its Cabinet note that was reviewed by ET, has also sought to empower Trai to conduct periodic spectrum audits on mobile phone companies. Following Cabinet clearance, the telecom regulator will be able to summon persons, examine them on oath, demand documents and evidence on affidavits, and, in appropriate cases, call for expert assistance in conducting inquiries.

"Trai needs to be functionally and administratively strengthened to enable it to discharge its responsibilities in a fast changing telecom sector. It has also been felt that spectrum being a valuable resource and with new business models centered around spectrum sharing being contemplated, Trai must be entrusted with the responsibility of periodical audit of spectrum usage.

Recognizing the need for protection of consumer rights and providing avenues for grievance redressal, Trai is also proposed to be vested with powers to lay down a framework for consumer grievance redressal to be followed by telecom service providers. It is proposed to transfer certain implementation functions such as allocation of numbering resources to Trai," the Cabinet note said.

85. SISTEMA TO REBUILD MTS BRAND, TO STEP UP MARKETING SPENDING

Russian conglomerate Sistema will increase marketing spends to rebuild its MTS telecom brand in India, two executives aware of the matter have said. The executives, who did not want to be named, said Sistema's Indian arm, Sistema Shyam Teleservices, will increase media spends in 2013 "by at least 20% to strengthen performance and customer appeal of the MTS brand across its nine-circle footprint".

86. VIDEOCON MOBILE TO PROVIDE PAN-INDIA SERVICES IN 2-3 YEARS

Videocon Mobile Services, which operates in seven of the 22 telecom circles, today said it intends to cover the entire country within 2-3 years. "The company is a national player in telecom sector and has ambition to start services across the country in two to three years," Arvind Bali, Director and CEO, Videocon Mobile Services told reporters here.

In order to provide unmatched network experience in Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh (MP-CG) circle, the company plans to add 1,550 cell sites to its existing 2,800-plus sites within the next two months, he said.

As part of its commitment to roll-out 4G services, the company has prepared a roadmap and commenced network planning to provide the next level of mobile communications, Bali said. The company plans commercial roll-out of 4G services by March 2014, he said.

87. MF FAROOQUI TO BE NEW TELECOM SECRETARY

Senior IAS officer M F Farooqui is likely to be the next Telecom Secretary. Farooqui, who is currently Secretary in the Department of Heavy Industries, is tipped to replace Rentala Chandrashekhar who superannuates at the end of this month. The Cabinet Committee on Appointments is believed to have cleared Farooqui's name and an announcement is likely to be made shortly. The Tamil Nadu cadre IAS officer of 1978 batch, Farooqui will have 15 months tenure at the helms of Department of Telecom before he attains superannuation age of 60 years in June 2014.

88. MTNL'S KULDEEP SINGH TO BE NEW TDSAT MEMBER

Government is learnt to have approved the name of Kuldeep Singh for the post of member TDSAT which has been lying vacant after retirement of P K Rastogi from the telecom tribunal in mid-February.

"Orders have been signed by competent authority for his appointment (Kuldeep Singh)," a senior government official told PTI.

The tribunal, which has a sanctioned strength of three members, including one Chairman and two members, has been without any head since November 2012 after its Chairman Justice S B Sinha retired.

The functioning of the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) was halted after lone member Rastogi hung his boots after serving three years. Singh is expected to join TDSAT from April 1. He has more than 38 years experience in telecommunication and information technology sectors.

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