

## Policy and Regulation

- ❖ The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has **informed** that the **requirement of registration of international mobile equipment identity (IMEI) of mobile phones** being **manufactured in India for export** is to be **kept in abeyance till further orders**. The announcement comes in the backdrop of requests from industry stakeholders to remove the requirement of registering the IMEI of mobile phones meant for exports.
- ❖ The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** has **revised** the **format** for the **submission of quarterly revenue and usage data by telecom operators**. Further, TRAI has also directed them to include their applicable gross revenue (ApGR) numbers under the unified licence agreement. Such reports will have to be submitted within 45 days from the end of each quarter. For the fiscal fourth quarter, however, the report may be submitted within 60 days from the end of the quarter.
- ❖ **TRAI** has **released an order amending the telecom tariff rules for SMS alerts, messages and cell broadcasts** sent **during or related to a disaster**. As per the order, telecom operators will be paid Rs 0.02 by the government for sending SMS alerts during disaster and non-disaster situations. However, messages will have to be sent free of cost during disasters that come under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- ❖ The **government** has **set up six task forces to provide market support to telecom equipment makers**, who **expressed concern** about the **import of network gear from China**. The announcement came following a meeting between the government and more than 40 chief executive officers (CEOs) of telecom gear companies that have qualified for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for telecom and networking products. The government will also devise a methodology to check imports from neighbouring nations, which are non-compliant with trusted source rules of the telecom sector.
- ❖ According to industry sources, **DoT** has **proposed not to monetise the rural broadband network infrastructure created under the BharatNet project and plans to replace it with alternative assets to achieve the target set under the National Monetisation Pipeline**. The earlier attempts to monetise assets under BharatNet had not received a satisfactory response from private players.

## Operators

- ❖ **Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)** has **asked the government to almost double its spectrum allocation in the auctioned 5G frequency bands and provide it frequency in the premium band of 700 MHz**. To this end, Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State for Communications noted that the government has reserved 10 MHz of paired spectrum in the 600 MHz band, 40 MHz in the 3300 MHz band and 400 MHz in the 26 GHz band in all circles, for providing 5G services by BSNL.
- ❖ According to **Ashwini Vaishnav**, Union Minister of Communications, Electronics and Information Technology and Railways, **BSNL's 4G network will be upgraded to 5G in five to seven months and rolled out across 135,000 telecom towers** the telco has in India. He remarked that BSNL will become a very strong stabilising factor in the telecom space in India.
- ❖ **Bharti Airtel and Meta Platforms, Inc.** have **announced a collaboration to support the growth of India's digital ecosystem**. Airtel and Meta will jointly invest in global connectivity infrastructure and communications platform as a service (CPaaS) based new-age digital solutions to support the emerging requirements of customers and enterprises in India.
- ❖ **Reliance Jio** is **planning to strategically partner with the Institute of Liver and Biliary Science (ILBS) to use the telco's 5G standalone (SA) network to provide impetus to healthcare technologies for various use cases**. Jio's 'True 5G' service combined with low latency is believed to facilitate new use cases in the field of healthcare.

## Infrastructure

- ❖ **Princeton Digital Group (PDG)** has **launched its flagship data centre (MU1) in India**. The MU1 data centre provides 48 MW of critical IT capacity across two buildings and has achieved the rare feat of IGBC Platinum certification. With an investment of \$300 million, MU1 is built across six acres within a larger IT

campus at Airoli, Navi Mumbai. The campus will deliver secure and scalable data centre capacity to hyperscalers – large cloud, content, commerce and fintech companies.

## Vendors

- ❖ **HCL Tech** has **partnered** with **Intel** and **Mavenir** to **develop** and **deliver private 5G solutions** to **enterprises**. With these partnerships, the companies will work jointly to develop a cloud-native end-to-end architecture of an Intel Xeon processor-based 5G solution while using a radio access network from Mavenir, Intel SmartEdge and HCLTech's management, orchestration and automation services.

## Finance

- ❖ In a regulatory exchange filing, **Indus Towers Limited** has **disclosed** its **plans** to **raise funds** of **up to Rs 15 billion** through the **issuance** of **non-convertible debentures (NCDs)** in **three tranches**, on a **private placement basis**. To this end, the company's board has approved the allotment of 15,000 rated, listed, unsecured, redeemable NCDs of a face value of Rs 1,000,000 each in three series, aggregating up to Rs 15 billion on a private placement basis. The funds via the issuance of NCDs will be raised in three tranches or series of Rs 7.50 billion, Rs 3.75 billion and Rs 3.75 billion, respectively. According to the exchange filing, the tenure of the three series would be 24, 30 and 36 months.
- ❖ In a recent filing to the US Securities and Exchange Commission, **American Tower Corporation (ATC)** has **said** that **Vodafone Idea Limited (Vi)** **may not** be **able** to **meet** its **operating obligations**, including **making future payments**, which **could have** a **material adverse effect** on **ATC's business** and **operational results**. Meanwhile, Vi is in talks with ATC to extend an agreement to sell optionally convertible debentures (OCDs) to ATC after the telco's shareholders' approval for the sale has lapsed.

## Internet and Broadband

- ❖ According to **Ashwini Vaishnav**, **telecom operators** have **expanded 5G services** to **50 towns across India** since its **launch** on **October 1, 2022**. He added that the minimum rollout obligations are required to be met over a period of five years in a phased manner from the date of allocation of 5G spectrum.

## Miscellaneous

- ❖ **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited** is in the **process** of **carving out** its **telecom vertical** to a **new fully-owned subsidiary**, **Powergrid Teleservices Limited**, after **receiving all regulatory approvals**. The company has also received approval from the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission to operate data centres.
- ❖ According to **Rajnath Singh**, Union Minister of Defence, the **government** will **expand information technology (IT)** and **telecom facilities** to **every part** of the **northeastern states**. He said that this will ensure economic development, good governance and public welfare.
- ❖ **Truecaller** has **launched** a **digital directory** of **several central** and **state government facilities** for **Android** and **iOS users**. The directory is currently available for 23 states and union territories free of cost.
- ❖ **VMware, Inc.** has **announced** that it would **support** the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay's Computing Systems Education and Research Lab (CSERL)** initiative to **create** a **cohesive platform** for **computing systems research** and **education**. The CSERL of IIT Bombay will receive a grant of \$240,000 from the VMware University Research Fund to focus on advancing academic and industry research in foundational technologies such as modern enterprise systems.
- ❖ **National Payments Corporation of India** has **extended** the **timeline** for **compliance** of **third-party app providers** who are **exceeding** the **volume cap** of **digital payment transactions** to **December 31, 2024**, an **extension** of **two years**. NPCI stated that the move has been undertaken taking into account the present usage and future potential of unified payments interface (UPI) and other relevant factors.
- ❖ **Meta** has reportedly **taken down over 29.2 million pieces** of **bad content** for **Facebook** and **2.7 million pieces** for **Instagram** during **October 2022**. As per Meta's compliance report from October 2022, it saw 703 reports through its grievance mechanism, out of which in 516 cases, users themselves were given the tools to resolve their issues, 187 reports were given special scrutiny, and 120 were acted against.