

# ‘Need for total rethink on satellite policy’

By **Mail Today Bureau**  
in New Delhi

**I**NDIA must go in for a fundamental rethink of its satellite communication policy to meet rising connectivity needs that are being fuelled by mobile data growth, digital aspirations and advent of new-age technologies, Telecom Secretary Aruna Sundararajan said on Wednesday.

She pointed out that there was a need for a comprehensive review in order to strike a balance between autonomy, security and the country's communications demand. It is possible to find a sweetspot between these three aspects, she added.

“Other countries have done so, and I don't think it is impossible for India to strike a calibrated position keeping these three imperatives in mind. Keeping our strategic capabilities and requirements in mind, we need to look at how we can bridge the deficit in terms of communication requirements,” she said.

Sundararajan outlined the massive growth in mobile data consumption, driven by first-time users, and India's increasing digital clout, and said there is no looking back for the country when it comes to strengthening its communications infrastructure.

She said that in an era of 5G and Internet of Things (IOT), the demand for communication infrastructure far from slowing down, will increase exponentially.

“We must have digital communications infrastructure that



facilitates all this. We really must have a fundamental rethink on India's satcom policy in light of what are the emerging requirements and India's aspirations,” Sundararajan said addressing annual Satcom Summit by Broadband India Forum.

The summit also delved on various aspects including broadband connectivity to the remote parts of the country, satellite mobility, inflight connectivity, new technologies and innovations.

She further said that the demand for communication network is also being propelled by financial service industry, digital payment compa-

nies, smartphone usage and social media.

Sundararajan noted that the draft national digital communications policy aims to provide universal broadband connectivity at 50Mbps to every citizen by 2022, create four million additional jobs, and also talks of enhancing the contribution of digital communications sector to 8 per cent of India's GDP, from the about 6 per cent now.

If we are to achieve robust modern digital communications infrastructure that the country needs...it has estimated the need for investment at USD 100 billion. Often we, in government,

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**ARUNA SUNDARARAJAN,**  
TELECOM SECRETARY

**Rising demand due to mobile data growth**

are asked if that is a high figure but I don't think so...I think this is realistic investment number in sync with our infrastructure requirements, she said.

Interestingly, earlier in March this year DoT special secretary N Sivasailam had pointed out that India builds the cheapest satellites but has the most expensive bandwidth.

He had blamed turf wars between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Department of Telecom (DoT) for delays in taking connectivity to far-flung areas.

Sivasailam also flagged issues of costs and said ISRO should do more in order to take the charges at par with global experience.