

'Telecom sector may see more disruptions'

New Delhi: The "brutally challenging" Indian telecom market has only seen the beginning of many disruptions, yet it offers ample growth potential to not only draw massive investments but ensure profitability, Telecom Secretary **Aruna Sundararajan** said Thursday.

Sundararajan said that \$100 billion dollar sectoral investment enshrined in the national digital communications policy is not an over-estimate and may well turn out to be less-than-adequate in the wake of new age technologies and advent of 5G.

Sundararajan said that while the Indian telecom market is "vibrant and exciting", it is also "brutally challenging".

"I think we have only seen the beginning of disruption and I am sure there will be many more disruptions to come but this is a market which is big enough, has enough growth potential for us to attract those kinds of investments and yet make investments profitable" she said.

Speaking at a panel discussion on 'Digital Infrastructure for Transforming India' organised by Broadband India Forum, she pointed out how China and the world at large are committing huge investments in the digital communications space, given that nearly everything - from education and healthcare, and livelihoods to entertainment - will be delivered on the digital highways.

"The global spend on telecom is expected to touch \$4



RINGING IN MORE CASH

\$4 trillion

global spend on telecom sector expected

\$100 bn

investments seen in digital communications infrastructure

trillion dollars, and China is spending around \$188 billion every year on digital communications infrastructure...For 5G alone, China's budget is expected to be of the order of \$500 billion. Estimates suggest that impact of 5G on global GDP can be potential doubling of GDP and so countries are infusing investments in telecom infrastructure," she said.

Sundararajan asserted that digital infrastructure has to be the crux of India's growth strategy as no other sector has the ability to match its positive spin-off.

"It is time for decision-makers to engage in serious conversation on how to enable \$100 billion investments in digital communications infrastructure," she said. Sundararajan added that a workshop will be organised soon to sensitise the states on their roles in India's digital narrative.

"The workshop will be held to sensitise the states on what is expected of them, how to benchmark states on and the key parameters thereof," she pointed out.

—PTI

