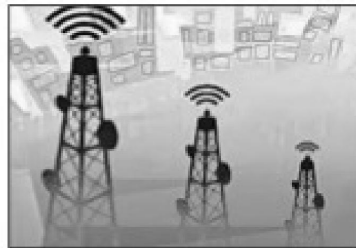


# 'Telcos can't pay through the nose, need to relook at auction system'

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi

Telecom operators need to be financially sound to build up infrastructure and there is a need to review the auction architecture as they cannot pay high prices for spectrum, " Niti Aayog Special Secretary Yaduvendra Mathur said.

"We need telcos also to be financially sound. They cannot pay through the nose for spectrum auction. Again, it is not an area of my expertise but my personal view is that we need to relook at the whole auction architecture, not only in spectrum but also in mining and other areas," Mathur said. He said the government wants access to real time data in decision making which can be done by installing IoT



(internet of things) devices supported by public wi-fi.

Mathur said telecom players should set up public wi-fi but for that they also need to be financially healthy.

The government is working on next round of spectrum auction that will comprise radiowaves for 5G services as well. Trai has recommended the auction of about 8,644 MHz of frequencies across eight signal bands, including in 700 Mhz, 800 s, 3.3-3.4 gigahertz (Ghz), 3.4-3.6 Ghz etc, at

an estimated base price of Rs 4.9 lakh crore.

A joint study by ICRIER and BIF has claimed that the spectrum price recommended by Trai is high due to inconsistency in the principle applied by the regulator for calculating base rates.

"I think it is a broader issue which is being looked at on how to maximise utilisation rather than only look at through revenue perspective. Growth is the message that we have from the top," Mathur said.

IoT and AI based applications can transform job creation in rural market and at a conservative estimate, will create over 2.8 mn jobs in rural India over a period of 8-10 years with an annual value of Rs 60,000 crore.