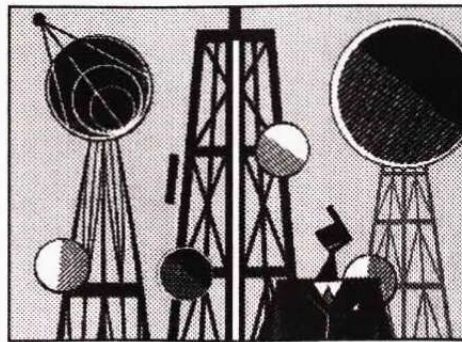


# Need to relook at telcos' auction system: Niti Aayog

**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, a senior Niti Aayog official said on Wednesday.

"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," Niti Aayog Special Secretary Yaduvendra Mathur said at Broadband India Forum (BIF) event here.

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.

Telecom regulator Trai has recommended the auction of about 8,644 MHz of frequencies across eight signal bands, including in 700 Mhz, 800 Mhz, 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. He said PM Narendra Modi keeps pushing for use of state-of-art technology in the government and those who do not use such technology are required to give an explanation.

As part of the seminar, BIF also released the findings of an ongoing study done in consultation with the Electronics Skill Council of India, Agriculture Skill Council of India and the Healthcare Sector Skill Council. AGENCIES