

India still not ready to launch 5G

Why in news?

Parliamentary committee thinks that India may miss the roll out of 5G services as mentioned in the government's report.

What are the findings of parliamentary committee?

- It says that despite Department of Telecommunications (DoT) report that India is ready to roll out 5G as early as 2018 but there is little progress on the ground.
- Uncertainty in spectrum auctions, high reserve price of spectrum, inadequate development of test cases, low reach of optical fibre & deficient back-haul capacity are the causes for it.
- It also noted that reserve price for auction of 5G was one of the highest in the world which needs to be rationalised.
- The reserve price must take into account the per capita income of the country & reserve prices mandated by other countries.

What is the status of global countries are in implementing 5G?

- Globally, across 59 countries 118 telecom service providers have started deploying 5G networks and AT&T started its testing and deployment in early 2018.
- Verizon followed AT&T's path in expanding its 5G ultra-wide broadband services to 60 cities in the US.
- China has rolled out its 5G services which covers around 8 per cent of their population.
- But India is yet to give formal approvals for 5G testing despite all the 3 major private telecom players having submitted their applications as early as January 2020.
- Reliance Jio is ready to deploy 5G services and is waiting for a nod from the DoT and Bharti Airtel has successfully demonstrated its 5G service over a commercial network in Hyderabad.

Will India miss the 5G bus?

- Though the DoT said that 5G network will be rolled out in late 2021 or early 2022, it would mostly be only in very selected areas.

- Therefore India will continue to use 4G network for the coming 5-6 years.
- It finds that 2G, 3G, 4G deployments was late by 4 years, 10years & 7 years respectively & sufficient preparatory work has not been undertaken for launching of 5G services in India.
- By the time 5G covers 20% of the world population, it will exclude a major portion of India hence it is likely that India is going to miss on 5G opportunities after missing the 2G, 3G and 4G bus.
- The committee suggests that India must expedite its approvals process, sort out issues such as spectrum auction, back-haul capacity, price and user test cases to catch up with other countries.

What can be done for faster roll out of 5G services?

- India can still meet its deadline and board with other countries in rolling out its 5G services.
- Even before the committee findings, DoT reduced the notice period for telcos to 6 months from 1 year to facilitate faster roll out of new services.
- This means that telcos can start testing the 5G network for commercial purposes in all three bands- low, mid and high frequency spectrum.
- It also means that companies can get faster return on their capital expenditure invested because large number of users are eager to try latest technology in mobile and internet connectivity.
- Internet speeds in the high-band spectrum of 5G has been tested to be as high as 20 Gbps (giga bits per second) whereas the maximum internet data speed in 4G is 1 Gbps.
- Moreover parliamentary committee hopes that the DoT would reach an understanding with the Department of Space and Ministry of Defence in earmarking the allocation of spectrum.

Source: The Indian Express



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