

## Telecom connectivity to bridge Rural/ Urban divide : PM

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### INVC Bureau

**New Delhi.** Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has said that all the 2, 50, 000 Gram Panchayats in the country will be provided high speed broadband connectivity by 2012 to remove asymmetry of information and opportunities to the rural population. The Prime Minister was speaking at the closing ceremony of "India Telecom- 2009" here today. Assuring the auction of 3G spectrum to be conducted shortly Mr. Singh stated that this spectrum will be allocated at a market determined price rather than an administered one. Lauding the setting up of 7 telecom centers of excellence by DOT in public private partnership mode he said that sustained competitiveness requires a strong research and development efforts. Expressing concern on the slow growth on the telecom manufacturing sector the Prime Minister called for using various fiscal incentives provided by the government to attract potential investors. Speaking on the occasion Shri A. Raja Minister for Communications and Information Technology said that Telecom sector is recognized as one of the major drivers of the growth of Indian economy as it is contributing about 5.6% in GDP. Indian economy registered 11% rise in FDI, despite the global recession and liquidity crunch, he added. Telecom sector has marked growth of 103% during fiscal 2008-09. The Minister further said that it also attracted USD 2558 million FDI in 2008-09 as compared to the USD 1261 million in 2007-08, which is about 10% of the total FDI inflow in the country during 2008-09. Enlisting the achievements of the Telecom department the Minister said that target of 500 million of telephone connections was scaled in September 2009 much ahead of the scheduled time of December 2010. Earlier Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Shri Gurudas Kamat welcomed the guests. While giving the vote of thanks MOS Shri Sachin Pilot announced the dates for next edition of the event to be held on 9-11 December, 2010.

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