

ITI gears up to bid for BSNL's 4G tender

Plans To Tie Up With Indian Software Giants TechM, TCS

Sidhartha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: With lengthening clouds over participation of Huawei and ZTE in future telecom contracts, the government is readying ITI to bid for BSNL's forthcoming tender, in partnership with Indian software giants.

Tech Mahindra (TechM and TCS are among some of the top Indian tech firms that the public sector company — which turned profitable last year after being in the red for 16 years — is in talks to finalise a deal under which ITI provides the hardware, while the software companies use their telecom skills to have a formidable relationship, government sources told **TOI**.

The agreements are expected to be in place over the next couple of weeks.

The BSNL tender for 4G equipment was cancelled after tensions in Ladakh with the PLA escalated and came in the backdrop of local players alleging a bias in favour of Chinese companies such as ZTE.

As reported by **TOI**, the government is internally discussing the technical details for 5G equipment and also the participation of Chinese vendors, whose role is under the lens globally from Australia to the UK, the United States and Canada.

With companies such as Huawei seen to have links with the PLA, the Indian government will shortly decide if they should be allowed to participate in equipment supply contracts, amid fears of data being illegally mined in China.

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LOCAL CHALLENGE



- ▶ The move is seen to be readying a local challenge to foreign rivals, including European vendors, for a possible bid for 5G telecom equipment
- ▶ The plan is being piloted by the communications and IT ministry under the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' initiative
- ▶ ITI is hoping to produce the equipment at its plants in Bengaluru, Palakkad and Rae Bareilly
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ITI is the second public sector player which is being readied to build domestic manufacturing capacity, which also requires an ecosystem comprising vendors. Bhel has sought interest from international players for manufacturing LCD panels, mobile phones, TV sets and solar power equipment as the government looks to cut down import of electronics and telecom equipment, for which a key source is China.