



GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES "DATA.GOV.IN"

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The Indian government has recently launched "data.gov.in", a joint initiative of Government of India and US Government, and will be on the lines of the US government's open data initiative, "data.gov." For this website, the US General Services Administration developed the data management system module and National Informatics Centre of India designed and developed the website together with its content management system and the visitor relation management module. The website offers department wise and category wise metrics and visitor statistics for data sets and apps. The website has been tested for compliance with the guidelines for Indian government websites and has been found suitable for usage for even person with disabilities. The site also offers apps from government departments for end-users/citizens. Like, Pocket Bhuvan, a geospatial app from the Indian Space Research Organization, with specific emphasis on Indian region and showcases Indian imaging capabilities. Initially, the data related to agriculture, health and energy will be made public and subsequently on transportation, water, sanitation and railways.

PSA view – This website would allow government and its various departments and ministries to use this space to publish their documents, data collected from citizens and permit them to function better and in a transparent way. However, it would be crucial to identify the date which would not breach privacy of citizens as well as copyright of the owners of the data.

DOT implements stringent radiation norms

DOT enforces the latest EMF (Electro Magnetic Frequency for Mobile Towers and Mobile handsets) Radiations Standards which came into effect on September 1, 2012. Accordingly, the emission limit has been lowered to 1/10th of the existing International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) exposure level. Base Transmitting Stations ("BTS") of telecom service provider radiating emissions more than permissible limits shall be levied with a fine of INR 5,00,000 and functioning of that BTS shall be terminated. Recently, the officials of DOT conducted verification at eleven BTS, including, among others, Vodafone, Reliance, Airtel, Idea, Aircel, Loop Telecom. All these eleven BTS were found radiating emissions beyond the permissible limits. DOT has issued stop orders to these eleven telecom service providers and the functioning of BTS shall resume only after the sites are in compliance with the radiation norms as well as upon satisfactory verification by the DOT officials.

Additional, DOT has directed all telecom service providers to conduct a comprehensive exercise to identify the BTS which are non compliant with the radiation norms and ensure that they are either shut down or in compliance with the latest norms.

PSA view – India is among the selected few countries in the world to have enforced stringent EMF (Electromagnetic Frequency) Radiation Standards. Keeping in mind the increasing number of mobile towers, mobile handsets and telecom players in India, Department of Telecom, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting revised the radiation guidelines. This endeavor on part of the Government is being viewed as a major step in favor of public health. As higher EMF emissions can cause several deadly diseases like cancer, mutation in humans and animals.

Telecom Companies permitted to bid for new bands during spectrum auctioning set for November

DOT has announced that the existing players in the telecom market who are bidding for a band in which they do not hold any spectrum, irrespective of the fact that they hold spectrum in other bands, they will be treated as new applicants and will have to bid for the minimum number of slots which new entrants are required to hold. The Telecom Commission has recently finalized the terms and conditions relating to entry fee, net worth requirements and performance guarantees for the unified license

PSA view – The applicability of the conditions applicable to new entrants on existing player has been put in place presumably to ensure that bids are received in full. While no hue and cry was raised by telecom companies yet, that may be in anticipation of relaxed eligibility norms which the DOT plans on releasing within three months. Taking into consideration the controversy struck telecom auctions that had taken place earlier, it may be prudent for the DOT to involve and implement additional safety conditions on all bidders.

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