Trai cuts ISD incoming call termination rate to 30 paise

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/ Telecom regulator Trai on Friday slashed international incoming call termination rate to 30 paise, from 53 paise, to curb the "grey route", an official statement Friday said. The new rate will be effective from February 1.

"The Authority has reduced the termination charges payable by an International Long Distance Operator (ILDO) to the access provider in whose network the call terminates from ?0.53 per minute to ?0.30 per minute," Trai said in a statement. Telecom firms levy termination charge on operators from whose networks calls have been made, for transmitting them to the subscriber. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India said the new rule "shall come into force from the 1st February, 2018". In a background note, it mentioned existence of grey market which routes the ISD calls made to India by setting up illegal VoIP (voice over internet protocol) gateways which needs to curbed. Trai said the menace of grey route poses serious security threat to the country apart from causing significant leakage in the revenue accruable to the country and its telecom service providers, and, proliferation of OTT (over-the-top) route for the carrying international voice traffic has many non-cost factors.

It said: "The Authority is of the view that, while deciding on the appropriate level of ITC (international termination charge) in the country, curbing the menace of grey route should be a more important regulatory priority than facilitating the shift of the international incoming traffic from OTT route to carrier route."Telecom regulator Trai on Friday slashed international incoming call termination rate to 30 paise, from 53 paise, to curb the "grey route", an official statement today said. The new rate will be effective from February 1.

"The Authority has reduced the termination charges payable by an International Long Distance Operator (ILDO) to the access provider in whose network the call terminates from ?0.53 per minute to ?0.30 per minute," Trai said in a statement. Telecom firms levy termination charge on operators from whose networks calls have been made, for transmitting them to the subscriber. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India said the new rule "shall come into force from the 1st February, 2018". In a background note, it mentioned existence of grey market which routes the ISD calls made to India by setting up illegal VoIP (voice over internet protocol) gateways which needs to curbed. Trai said the menace of grey route poses serious security threat to the country apart from causing significant leakage in the revenue accruable to the country and its telecom service providers, and, proliferation of OTT (over-the-top) route for the carrying international voice traffic has many non-cost factors. It said: "The Authority is of the view that, while deciding on the appropriate level of ITC (international termination charge) in the country, curbing the menace of grey route should be a more important regulatory priority than facilitating the shift of the international incoming traffic from OTT route to carrier route." (PTI)

Italy to send high-powered delegation at Bengal biz meet

KOLKATA, JAN 12 /--/ Italy has decided to send a high-powered delegation to the upcoming Bengal Global Business Summit to beld in the city on January 16 and 17, a diplomat said on Friday. Italian consul general in Kolkata Damiano Francovigh said that the delegation would be led by Italian ambassador in India Lorenzo Angelino. He said that a few Italian companies have decided to establish presence in this part of the country, adding that joint-venture (JV) agreements would be inked during the summit. The delegation would represent sectors like leather, metals, engineering and transport, he told reporters here today. Francovigh said Italy would be the partner country in the summit for the second time in a row, and the delegation is expected to represent more than 30 companies, mostly in small and medium enterprises (SME) sector. He said that there was a huge potential of growth for Italian investments in West Bengal, adding that several of them were already present in the state. Earlier, China, France and Poland had also announced that they would send delegations to the summit. (PTI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing on the occasion of the Inaugural Ceremony of 22nd National Youth Festival - 2018 (via Video Conference), in New Delhi---PIB

Govt willing to hand-hold young entrepreneurs: PM

NEW DELHI/GREATER NOIDA, JAN 12 /--/ The youth of today should become job creators and think out of the box, for which the government is willing to hand-hold them for setting up start-ups, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday.

He also said that while patience was a virtue, it should not stop the youth from coming up with innovative ideas for the benefit of the country and society. Addressing the students of Gautam Buddha University in Greater Noida on the occasion of the inauguration of the 22nd National Youth Festival, Modi, via video-conferencing, said one had to make the beginning alone and if the person was committed to the path chosen, others would join him. "Do not worry. Move ahead, take the first step. The government is with you," he said, referring to those youth planning to set up start-ups. The prime minister assured them that they would not have to worry abut bank guarantees, loans and a heavy paper work as they would get all the help from the government.

"We will hand-hold you. Then, you yourself are capable of moving ahead," he told the gathering. Referring to the Centre's Mudra scheme, Skill India and Startup India funds, Modi said there were enough platforms to help young entrepreneurs think out of the box and begin something new. He also urged the people to make sports an integral part of their lives. Speaking on the occasion, Adityanath said only the youth could change the system with new innovations. He added that the Indian youth had several ideas, which could be used for the welfare of the people. Taking the name of Lord Rama and some religious leaders, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister said all of them were young when they chose the path of people's welfare and attained spirituality.

"It is not important how long a person lives. How does he live his life and benefit the society is important. The youth is the symbol of the country's energy," he added. (PTI)

CIL changes Coal Pricing Policy

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, JAN 12/--/Coal India Limited is rationalising the prices of coal to make the system more transparent, streamlined and consumer friendly, CIL has changed its pricing policy for non-coking coal in alignment with global prices. This decision was taken on 9th January, 2018

The new pricing system is based on 'Per unit calorific value of coal (Rs/ Kcal) which is a global system of coal pricing instead of Band based pricing system. Under the Band based pricing system coal had been earlier categorised under three groups. The new pricing policy is more linear in comparison to the older pricing mechanism. This provides consumers with a more accurate and transparent method for arriving at coal prices. Additionally, calculating the basic price of non-coking coal of any mine of CIL based on its GCV is simpler. WPI, CPI as well as global prices of coal have increased significantly over the last couple of months, however the rationalisation of coal prices has helped keep prices low in India. In the new policy, CIL has offered heavy discount to its long term consumers. This discount varies between 44%-66% depending on GCV of coal.

Due to the earlier Band Pricing System, consumers had to pay Rs. 3210/ton for all G2 coal lying within the GCV range of 6701-7000. However, in the new Pricing Policy consumers will have to pay Rs. 144/ton less for coal having GCV 6701 Kcal compared to coal with GCV 7000 Kcal. The cheaper price is due to the linear pricing mechanism of the new policy.

Mercedes-Benz launches Mobilo

KOLKATA, JAN 12/--/Continuing its drive to provide its customers a delightful and hassle-free ownership experience and strive to become the 'Mercedes of Service', luxury car maker Mercedes-Benz launched its new standard mobility solutions–Mobilo Plus and Mobilo Lite. Mobilo Plus, is complimentary for the customers up to three years of vehicle purchase and can be bought from the 4th to 8th year of the life of the car.

Roland Folger, Managing Director & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India commented, "Mercedes-Benz's innovative after-sales initiatives have been successful in differentiating the brand and redefining customer centricity, the results of which manifests in our topmost ranking at the JD Power Customer Service Index 2017. Towards this, the introduction of the Mobilo program reiterates our customer commitment of providing a hassle-free ownership experience." (EOIC)

Vision RX Lab introduces Blumax

KOLKATA, JAN 12/--/ Vision Rx Lab introduced Blumax protective lenses for the consumers in the Indian market. Since sunlight carries harmful blue light besides UV rays, it is pertinent to take optimum protection from such harmful rays both indoors and outdoors. Besides increasing usage of such digital devices as computers, laptops, smart phones, tablets, television etc. leave us vulnerable to the dangers of "blue light".

Speaking on this new innovation, Sanjiv Kumar Gupta, CEO, Vision RX Lab, said, "What makes Blumax unique is that these lenses are designed to fit all prescriptions including single vision, bifocal and progressive, allowing users to avail the benefits of blue light protection along with their individual prescriptions. Besides, it also comes with wide range of coating options to make the lens durable and easy to clean. Since its launch, Blumax has become a preferred blue light blocking lens product for its advanced lens technology and the entire Rx support it offers. We are really proud to offer Indian customers this unique technology which is solution of all eye related problems." (EOIC)

IPF presents 'INDPLAS'18"

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, JAN 12/--/To support the growth opportunities in plastic industry in Eastern India, Indian Plastics Federation (IPF) is organising it's triennial exhibition "INDPLAS'18" in Kolkata from 30th November – 3rd December, 2018.

Indian Plastics Federation (IPF) updated about Indplas '18 - the largest sector-specific business-to-business (B2B) international exhibition in the eastern region. INDPLAS'18 is the 8th edition of "INDPLAS" series, the International Exhibition on plastics that will bring entire plastics industry under one roof. Alok Tibrewala, President, Indian Plastics Federation, said: The Indian economy today stands at US$2.5 trillion with the eastern states accounting for 16% contribution to the overall GDP. As per NITI AYOG, the economy will swell to US$7.5 trillion in next 10 years with the eastern states accounting for 30% of the economy. It is expected that the state of West Bengal will be the lead state in not only propelling the growth but is expected to emerge as the fastest growing state economy in India. Ashok Jajodia, Chairman, Exhibition Organising Committee - INDPLAS'18, Indian Plastics Federation said that this time, the number of participants in INDPLAS'18 is expected to touch 500, an all time high for the INDPLAS exhibitions. There is very encouraging response from Indian and foreign machinery, ancillaries, raw material, additives, master batches producers to participate in Indplas'18. Their response itself re-affirms the untapped growth opportunity in the plastics industry in Eastern India which is already on an upswing.

"Indplas'18 is going to play a pivotal role in development and investment in Plastic sector in Eastern Region and will be an ideal platform for buyers and sellers" said Mr Jajodia.

(Pix: Arijit Ganguly)

NCLT pronounce liquidation of Gujarat NRE Coke

KOLKATA, JAN 12 /--/ Liquidation order of city-based Gujarat NRE Coke was pronounced by the Kolkata bench of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under section 14 of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The NCLT order said "The liquidator shall try to dispose off the corporate debtor company as a going concern after publication of notice in newspaper with the reserve price which shall be equal to the total debt amount including interest and maximum period applicable for trying the sale of the corporate debtor as a going concern will be three months from the date of the order."

The liquidation order was issueD last night by the bench. Sumit Binani, the resolution professional (RP) of the company, is appointed as the liquidator. Last April, the tribunal had admitted an application by the metallurgical coke producer under the IBC for initiating the insolvency resolution process.

First unit of BTPS to start commercial generation by Jan end

PATNA, JAN 12 /--/ The first unit of 250 MW of Barauni Thermal Power Station, is expected to start commercial generation by the end of this month, a senior BTPS official said on Friday. The Barauni Thermal Power Station is wholly owned by the Bihar government. Two units of 250 MW each is being built. "We have been carrying out commissioning activity for past couple of months. First, the 250 MW plant was fired up with oil and ran the unit up to 35 MW and later on the intervening night of January 10-11 (2018), the plant was fired with coal and ranit (unit) to its full load capacity of 250 MW," BTPS general manager A K Sinha told PTI over phone. Sinha further clarified that "We stopped the plant after running it to its full load capacity for few minutes in order to ensure whether or not the plant, its machines and equipment are working efficiently and properly to make it operational....Defects and deviations have been found during trial but we hope to rectify all these defects at the earliest to make the plant commercially operational by the end of January."

Factory output growth hits 17-mth high of 8.4% in Nov

NEW DELHI, JAN 12 /--/ Industrial production growth zoomed to a 17-month high of 8.4 per cent in November 2017 on the back of robust performance of manufacturing and capital goods sectors.

The factory output, measured in terms of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), grew 5.1 per cent in November 2016, as per data released today by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The previous high was recorded at 8.9 per cent in June, 2016. Meanwhile, the IIP growth for October 2017 has been revised downwards to 2 per cent from the provisional estimates of 2.2 released last month. Manufacturing sector, which constitutes 77.63 per cent of the IIP, recorded an impressive growth of 10.2 per cent in November as compared to 4 per cent a year ago. The industry group 'Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products' has shown the highest positive growth of 39.5 percent, followed by 29.1 per cent in computer, electronic and optical products and 22.6 percent in 'manufacture of other transport equipment'. Capital goods output, which is a barometer of investment, grew by 9.4 per cent in November as against 5.3 per cent a year ago. Consumer non-durables, which are mainly fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), showed an output growth of 23.1 per cent as against 3.3 per cent in November 2016. However, the mining sector production growth slowed to 1.1 per cent from 8.1 per cent a year ago. Electricity generation growth too slowed to 3.9 per cent in November from 9.5 per cent in the corresponding month a year ago. Production growth of consumer durables, mainly white goods like TVs, refrigerators and washing machines, also slowed to 2.5 per cent from 6.8 per cent.

As per use-based classification, the growth rates in November 2017 are 3.2 per cent in primary goods, 5.5 per cent in intermediate goods and 13.5 per cent in infrastructure/ construction goods. In terms of industries, 15 of the 23 industry groups in the manufacturing sector have shown positive growth during November 2017 as compared to the same month a year ago.

Retail inflation rises to 5.21%, dashes rate cut hopes

NEW DELHI: Retail inflation crossed the RBI's comfort level and rose to 5.21 per cent in December on rise in prices of food items, egg and vegetables, dashing hopes of interest rate cut in the near future.

The retail inflation, based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 4.88 per cent in November. In December 2015, it was 3.41 per cent. The Reserve Bank has been asked by the government to keep inflation at 4 per cent, plus or minus 2 per cent, and its rise beyond the comfort zone will put pressure on the central bank not to cut interest rate (repo rate). As per the data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), inflation for the food basket increased to 4.96 per cent in December from 4.42 per cent in the preceding month. The data revealed that eggs, vegetables and fruits became costlier, while inflation moderated in case of cereals and pulses. (PTI)

Cable TV Show 2018 flagged off

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, JAN 12/--/Cable TV Show 2018 Kolkata was flagged off today by Firhad Hakim, Minister-in-charge for Municipal Affairs, at the Science City with much fanfare.

The three-day event from January 10 to 12 is a much-awaited annual affair organized by Kolkata-based Cable TV Equipments Traders & Manufacturers Association (CTMA). This year (2018) would be the 21st edition of the SHOW and would remain opened to the public from 11 am till 6 pm for free entry by on spot registration.

"Cable television services are essential services and should not have 18 per cent GST which is in effect at present. I shall, on behalf of the Cable TV operators, present this issue with Finance Minister Amit Mitra, who is a member of the GST Council. I will request Mr Mitra take up the matter at the GST Council to reduce the GST on Cable TV services to 5 per cent," Mr Hakim said at the inauguration of the SHOW.

More than 10,000 cable operators and representatives, traders, manufacturers, channel partners, distributors, broadcasters and Multi-System Operators (MSOs) from across India and overseas vendors are participating in the three-day Cable TV Show 2018. The Cable TV sector has taken a major leap with digitalization empowering the viewers and enhancing transparency and accountability, issues that have been plaguing the sector.

"Following the consent of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, we would hold a Cable TV Summit in April 2018 in Kolkata at the Netaji Indoor Stadium. The CABLE TV SHOW 2018 is the 21st Annual Show organized by CTMA.

There are 25 pavilions and 98 stalls put up this year for showcasing a wide range of state-of-the-art products and services related to the cable TV industry. This year the CABLE TV SHOW is sponsored by associate sponsors Fiber Fox, Globetek, INNO Instrument, MSO Rollout, Star FFS, and supported by MSOs SITI Cable, GTPL KCBPL & Manthan Digital," said Pawan Jajodia, Treasurer & Chairman Exhibition, CTMA.

"This year, though we have increased the space for the CABLE TV SHOW 2018 by almost 30 per cent over last year by shifting to the Science City from Netaji Indoor Stadium. However, there is still a huge demand from across India for space from different vendors who want to participate in the SHOW. All the space for the SHOW was sold out in record time," Mr Jajodia said.

Left to Right: Members of CTMA, K K Binani, Pawan Jajodia, Minister-in-Charge Municipal Affairs, Firhad Hakim, Rajendra P Agarwal and Suresh Sethia at the inauguration of 21st three-day annual Cable TV Show 2018 at Science City--Arijit Ganguly