

## Telecom minister urges industry to improve R and amp;D, exports

Communications and IT Minister A. Raja Friday urged the telecom industry to strengthen its research and development (R and amp;D) capabilities and put greater focus on exports to gain a competitive edge over others.

Raja said though the appreciation of the rupee is hampering the country's export sector, there is still a lot of potential that needs to be explored.

'Building economies of scale is the way forward, if we are looking at becoming globally competitive. We need to build the domestic component industry as well, so that our manufacturers can be globally competitive,' he said in a statement.

The minister also underscored the need for a solid private-public-partnership model to realise the full potential of hardware and software sectors.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at a telecom industry meet: 'I am concerned about our capabilities in telecom R and amp;D and manufacturing. Can we have a sector where we are world-class in telecom networks but do not have an adequate manufacturing presence?'

'I am happy that an enabling R and amp;D environment is now being created by setting up Telecom Centres of Excellence through a PPP mode in our premier institutions of higher learning,' Singh said.

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