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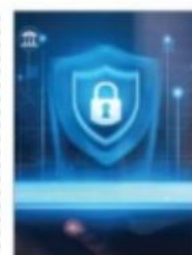
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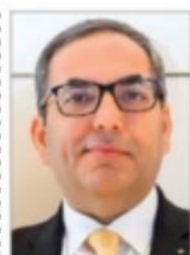
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# “Need to increase fibre connectivity”

Interview with APAR Telecom Solutions’ Girish Gupta

With growing 5G connectivity, the telecom industry is witnessing increasing demand for innovative fibre solutions. To this end, APAR Telecom Solutions is offering a bouquet of new and future-ready cabling solutions. In an interview with *tele.net*, Girish Gupta, senior vice-president and business head, APAR Telecom Solutions, talks about the company’s key offerings, future plans and strategies...

## How is the 5G ecosystem in India evolving? What role is APAR Telecom Solutions playing in this space?

The development of the 5G ecosystem in the country is still at a nascent stage. The government has taken significant steps to establish the necessary infrastructure for 5G networks, including the allocation of 5G spectrum and implementation of the production-linked incentive scheme to encourage domestic production of 5G equipment. Communication service providers (CSPs) have also made efforts and investments to roll out 5G networks across India by early 2024. Despite being a late starter, the country is progressing at a faster pace than the rest of the world, reaching 600 cities in just six months and developing 5G lab ecosystems in multiple universities beyond IITs.

The increasing digitalisation of devices and applications is driving the need for 5G, resulting in massive data traffic and a greater need for reliable connectivity with faster speeds and lower latency. Meeting this demand will require the deployment of more radio towers, distributed antenna systems and small cell towers to create a dense and diverse 5G infrastructure. These towers, together with wireless devices, will need a strong fibre backhaul and front haul connectivity, which is where APAR comes in by offering solutions.

## What are the key products/solutions offered by your company?

APAR Industries is a reputable manufacturer and solution provider offering optical fibre cables (OFC) and power cables for a variety of applications across multiple sectors ranging from telecom to defence, railways, renewable energy, transport infra-

structure, and oil and gas. The company’s telecom division, APAR Telecom Solutions, has a product range that offers several cable options including OFC, hybrid cables, specialty cables, local area network cables, optical ground wire, and connectorised solutions. These products are suitable for different applications such as duct, direct-burial, aerial, underwater and last-mile connectivity in rural and urban areas.

APAR has developed a new hybrid cable solution specifically for 5G connectivity. This advanced and innovative solution provides both data and power supply to 5G equipment across towers. With over two decades of experience in OFC and power cables, the APAR team has designed and developed a future-ready solution that is greener, faster and cheaper to deploy.

## What are the key challenges hampering the growth of the 5G ecosystem?

First, CSPs need to invest heavily in building reliable underlying infrastructure with a fresh and multilayered approach to leverage the massive opportunities presented by 5G. However, the low ARPUs and lack of returns on investment for such extensive investments, coupled with the old regimes that have not changed significantly over the years, continue to be key constraints for CSPs. The government can also support the industry by considering a reduction in Universal Service Obligation Fund levies and waiving of licence fees to encourage more investment in 5G.

Second, the industry needs to increase



fibre connectivity to achieve the right quality of service on 5G networks. Currently, only 40 per cent towers are connected with fibre, and at least 80 per cent connectivity is required for delivering quality of service on 5G networks. The industry will require around Rs 2 trillion towards OFC infrastructure

for this level of tower connectivity. Additionally, faster right-of-way (RoW) permissions are needed for timely fibre deployment. The government has taken several initiatives to enable RoW in the past but the policy needs immediate implementation along with a single-window clearance system at nominal costs to accelerate 5G deployment.

## What are your plans for the next two to three years?

The telecom industry is moving towards high usage and quality of service, making the need for OFC more critical than ever. To meet this demand, APAR Telecom Solutions is co-developing new products with customers to enhance the deployment capabilities of 5G and internet of things (IoT) networks in a cost-effective manner. Moreover, APAR is focused on developing sustainable and environment-friendly cables. It plans to invest Rs 1 billion over the next three years to develop specific solutions for the 5G market. APAR is committed to providing end-to-end solutions and aims to be the preferred partner for clients in the domestic and global markets by offering a comprehensive range of products that cater to 5G and IoT needs. ▲