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PM Modi seeks to position India as big exporter of tele tech

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NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday sought to position India as a large exporter of telecom technology, instead of being a consumer, and underlined how the country offers trust and scale.

The PM's statement, while unveiling a road map and a vision document for building global leadership in the next-gen 6G services and its eco-system and usage, comes at a time when several countries — from Australia to the UK and the US — are shunning Chinese companies such as Huawei and ZTE and looking at European and Korean companies to meet their telecom infrastructure needs.

“It is natural to have expectations from India when we talk about bridging the technological divide. India's capability, its innovation culture, infrastructure, skilled and innovative manpower, a favourable policy environment, are the basis for this expectation. In addition, India has two other important key elements — trust and scale. Without trust and scale, we can't take technology to every corner,” he said, while inaugurating the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s Area Office and Innovation Centre in India. Telecom and IT minister Aswhini Vaishnaw and external affairs minister S Jaishankar were present at the event, which was also addressed by ITU Secretary General Doreen-Bogdan Martin.

In recent years, the government has focused on developing an indigenous 5G stack and is in talks with the US and other countries for launching a test bed, while also collaborating to develop 6G capability that will help cut

dependence on foreign players.

Emphasising that India is now “the most connected democracy” in the world, Modi said the country’s efforts in developing new-age telecom technologies have become a matter of discussion all around the world.

“Telecom technology for India is not a mode of power, but a mission to empower,” the PM said, adding that digital technology is universal in the country and is accessible to everyone. “... broadband connectivity had six crore users in India before 2014, but that number has gone up to more than 80 crore today. The number of internet connections in India is more than 85 crore compared to 25 crore before 2014.”

He said India’s telecom technologies are attracting the attention of many nations in the world, and added that while the country was a mere user of services before 4G, now it is moving towards becoming one of the biggest exporter of technologies globally. “India is working with many countries to change the work culture of the whole world with the power of 5G.”

Lauding the pace at which 5G services are being rolled out across the country, he said the country is rapidly moving towards the next step of digital revolution. “India is the country with the fastest 5G rollout in world as 5G services have been rolled out in more than 125 cities in just 120 days and 5G services have reached approximately 350 districts. India is now discussing 6G just six months after 5G rollout. The vision document will become a major basis for 6G rollout in next few years.”

Modi said India’s 5G standards are part of global 5G systems and the country will now work closely with ITU for standardisation of future technologies. “The Indian ITU Area office will also help in creating the right environment for 6G.”

The PM also unveiled Bharat 6G Vision Document and launched 6G R&D test bed. The document has been prepared by Technology Innovation Group on 6G (TIG-6G) that was constituted in November 2021, with members

from various ministries, research and development institutions, academia, standardisation bodies, telecom operators and industry, to develop a road map and action plans for 6G.