

Deutsche Telecom plans India venture

NEW DELHI, December 27 (IPA): Deutsche Telecom (DETECON) a subsidiary of the giant TELEKOM, a DM 38-billion German government company, has set its eyes on expansion of telecom network in India in a big way.

The start, interestingly, is to be with Punjab. DETECON has joined hands with Fujitsu, the Japanese telecom multinational and two Indian partners — government of Punjab and the Virgo group — to set up a joint venture which is to invest Rs 1,000 crore in expanding telecom network in Punjab during the next three years.

A MoU to this effect was signed in Bonn last week between DETECON and Virgo who also represented Fujitsu and the Punjab government. The other shareholders of DETECON are the two largest banks of Germany, viz. Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank.

What has facilitated this coming together of Japanese and German telecom giants is that Fujitsu already has a joint venture company, Fujitsu India Telecom Ltd. in which the Punjab State Electronics Board and Virgo group are partners. The Fujitsu company is setting up the first private digital

electronic switching systems factory at Mohali, Punjab, with a Rs 110-crore investment.

The new joint venture with DETECON will harness a vast resource base opening up plans for a major expansion of telecom facilities in Punjab. Moreover, the backup of such financial strength of the leading German banks will ensure that this new joint venture will have the opportunities to set up such facilities in other states also.

In Punjab, the new joint venture will aim at ensuring widespread telecom facilities, the network reaching out to rural areas, which in Punjab are already the most developed in the country. The traditional cable or the wireless route will be used, depending on the requirement of the subscriber.

Sources say, within two years of their launching operations, a subscriber in Punjab will get telephone connection in just four weeks of making an application.

DETECON's has vast experience in rapid development of telecommunication network both in West and East Germany, where it is operating 35 million lines. The new joint venture is expected to bring all this expertise to India.