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Khullar becomes new Trai chairman

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NEW DELHI, 13 MAY: Commerce secretary Rahul Khullar (in photo) has been appointed as the new chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India for a three-year term.

Mr Khullar, a 1975 batch IAS officer of Delhi cadre, will succeed JS Sarma, whose tenure ended today. The tenure of Mr Khullar, who was due to retire in April next year, will be till May 2015. "I will be joining from tomorrow," Mr Khullar said.

Mr Khullar, 59, will head the Trai at a time when the regulator is in the line of fire of telecom operators for its recommendations on spectrum auction in which it has proposed a high base price for radio waves. The auction is to be undertaken before 31 August this year.

The new Trai chief will have to deal with



the telecom industry which is widely divided. While GSM operators, through their association COAI, have alleged the latest Trai recommendations are favourable to those operators which provide dual technology ser-

vices, the dual service providers have alleged that the Trai has ignored various issues resulting in big benefit for the old GSM players.

As commerce secretary, Mr Khullar is credited with trade normalisation between India and Pakistan. He had been successful in implementing measures that helped exports cross \$300 billion mark in financial year 2011-12. He has also negotiated well India's stance at WTO and various other multilateral pacts.

Former DIPP secretary RP Singh, defence production secretary Shekhar Agarwal, fertiliser secretary Ajay Bhattacharya, former DoT member (technology) Chandra Prakash, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation commissioner Subodh Kumar, former secretary (defence finance) Indu Liberhan and Vijayalakshmi K Gupta were also in race for the post.