



Market News Snapshots

20 percent cellphone users to switch to 3G in 3 years

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BEIJING -- About 20 percent of China's mobile phone users would choose the high-speed third-generation (3G) networks in three years, a telecom operator said Thursday.

Chang Xiaobing, president of China Unicom, one of three telecom operators that secured a 3G license, made the remark on the sideline of the ongoing annual session of the 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's top political advisory body.

China issued three 3G licenses in January. The other two are China Mobile and China Telecom.

Building of the 3G networks is expected to cost billions of dollars.

"Investment on 3G network is less expensive than in past years, " said Chang, a CPPCC National Committee member.

"Thus, there is larger profit margin, although such investment would experience a longer period before it could generate returns, " he said.

The three 3G operators are expected to invest a total of 170 billion yuan (\$24.85 billion) in network construction this year.

China Mobile, the country's largest telecom operator, launched its 3G services on tentative basis last year.

The launch of the 3G network would make it possible for users to enjoy faster data downloads, making video calls and watching TV programs via cellphones.

Mobile phone users in China reached more than 640 million at the end of last year.