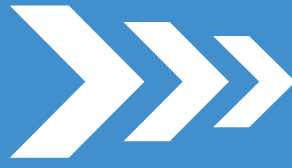




ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25



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डॉ. पेम्मासानी चंद्र शेखर
Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar



राज्य मंत्री
संचार एवं ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
Minister of State for Communications
and Rural Development
Government of India

MESSAGE

I extend my greetings to COAI and its member companies for their continued contribution to India's digital progress.

India's telecom sector stands as a pillar of national transformation- empowering growth, inclusion, and innovation. Our leadership in 5G rollout reflects the strong alignment between industry initiative and policy foresight. With expanding coverage in rural and urban areas alike, telecom services are driving impact across healthcare, education, logistics, and agriculture.

I particularly commend the role of cellular operators in reducing the digital divide, expanding mobile telephony, and ensuring that services remain affordable and accessible, even in remote regions. These efforts have significantly advanced inclusion and public service delivery.

The Government remains committed to ensuring spectrum availability for emerging domains like AI, IoT, and 6G. At the same time, satellite communications are being actively supported to address connectivity gaps in far-flung and underserved areas. The Bharat 6G Vision is guiding our push towards next-generation technologies through R&D, IP creation, and global collaboration.

User safety is paramount. Initiatives like Sanchar Saathi and Chakshu are equipping citizens to combat fraud and misuse. In this regard, I urge all telecom providers to intensify investments in indigenous R&D, adopt robust spam prevention tools, and enhance quality of service across networks.

As we move toward Viksit Bharat @2047, a resilient and innovation-driven telecom sector will be central to India's growth story. I look forward to continued partnership between Government and industry in building a secure, inclusive, and globally competitive digital ecosystem.

(Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar)



अनिल कुमार लाहोटी
Anil Kumar Lahoti



सत्यमेव जयते
Message

अध्यक्ष
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Chairman
TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA



I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on yet another year of commendable work in articulating and advocating issues for its member stakeholders and the successful publication of its Annual Report for the fiscal year 2024-25.

The past year has been marked by significant regulatory and policy advancements that have further strengthened India's telecommunications landscape. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has remained steadfast in its commitment to fostering a fair, competitive, and consumer-centric telecom ecosystem. The implementation of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, has provided a forward-looking regulatory framework, paving the way for enhanced ease of doing business, spectrum management reforms, and the realization of the 'One Nation-One Authorisation' vision. These initiatives have not only streamlined licensing processes but have also attracted fresh investments, spurred innovation, and reinforced India's position as a global telecom leader.

TRAI also prioritized broadband expansion, digital infrastructure development, and bridging the digital divide. The rollout of 5G services across the nation along with the groundwork for Bharat 6G Vision are testaments to India's commitment to next-generation connectivity. In collaboration with telecom service providers and stakeholders, TRAI has actively promoted infrastructure sharing and the adoption of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain to curb spam and fraudulent activities. Our unwavering focus remains on fostering an inclusive, transparent, and future-ready telecom sector.

I compliment COAI for its continued advocacy and invaluable contributions to the growth and evolution of India's telecom industry. TRAI looks forward to deepening its engagement with COAI and all stakeholders as we work together towards a digitally empowered India. My best wishes to COAI and its Members on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held in June 2025.


(Anil Kumar Lahoti)



डॉ. नीरज मिश्र, भा.प्र.से.
सचिव
DR. NEERAJ MITTAL, IAS
Secretary



सत्यमेव जयते



भारत सरकार
संचार मंत्रालय
दूरसंचार विभाग
Government of India
Ministry of Communications
Department of Telecommunications



MESSAGE

At the outset, I congratulate COAI for yet another fruitful year of ably steering the efforts of the telecom sector in the country, towards the common goal of achieving the leading position as the global telecom manufacturing and supply hub.

As we reflect on the fiscal year 2024-25, it is with great pride that I highlight the remarkable achievements and milestones that have shaped India's telecommunications landscape. Our collective efforts have not only propelled the industry to new heights but have also laid a robust foundation for future innovations and growth.

The successful nationwide deployment of 5G technology stands as a major achievement, with over 4.69 lakh 5G Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) installed across the country. This expansion, now being supported by the Right of Way Rules 2024, has not only enhanced network capabilities but will also enable new applications in healthcare, education and industry, demonstrating the power of high-speed connectivity in driving economic growth. The implementation of the Telecommunications Act 2023 has provided a much-needed business friendly framework that streamlines processes, promotes fair competition and attracts FDI. The efforts under Bharat 6G will set our long-term strategy, laying the foundation for next-generation telecommunications infrastructure. Research and development efforts are being accelerated to ensure that India is not just a consumer but a key contributor to global 6G advancements.

All the above efforts will help us bridge the digital divide which continues to be a central policy objective. Rural and remote areas require a collaborative approach among stakeholders to improve last-mile connectivity. Amended BharatNet program will support the expansion of fibre-optic networks and ensure affordable broadband access. Cybersecurity threat mitigation and integration of AI-driven solutions into telecom operations should be at the top of our agenda in near future.

I hope COAI will continue to support efforts to shape an inclusive, resilient and future-ready telecom network of Government.

New Delhi
Dated: 7th April, 2025

(Dr. Neeraj Mittal)

COAI

Chairperson's Message



Abhijit Kishore

Chairperson, COAI

Chief Operating Officer, Vodafone Idea Limited

Dear Members and Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the fiscal year 2024-25, it is with immense pride that I present the achievements and milestones that have defined this period for the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). Our industry has continued to be the backbone of India's digital transformation, driving innovation, inclusivity and economic growth.

COAI has been at the forefront of the Bharat 6G Vision, laying the groundwork for future technological advancements and ensuring that India remains a leading global digital economy. In alignment with sustainable development goals, we have promoted the adoption of renewable energy by pushing for Green Energy Open Access initiative, reducing our carbon footprint and setting industry benchmarks. Additionally, the amendment of the Indian

Telegraph (Right of Way) Rules, 2023, and the launch of the Chakshu application have streamlined processes, facilitating faster network rollouts and enhancing mobile broadband penetration across the nation.

The implementation of the Telecommunications Act 2023, has further strengthened the industry, providing a robust regulatory framework that fosters fair competition and encourages investments in the sector. This year also marked the successful nationwide deployment of 5G technology, ushering in a new era of connectivity. The rapid expansion of 5G services has not only enhanced user experiences but also catalysed advancements in sectors such as healthcare, education and agriculture.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to supporting the Government's efforts to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that the benefits of connectivity reach every corner of the country. Emphasizing sustainable practices, we will continue to advocate for green energy solutions and environmentally friendly policies within the industry. COAI will persist in its role of liaison and cooperation between the industry and government, striving for policies that foster innovation while ensuring fair competition and consumer protection. Furthermore, we are dedicated to exploring and investing in emerging technologies, preparing for the seamless

integration of 6G and beyond, to keep India at the cutting edge of global telecommunications.

The fiscal year 2024-25 has been transformative for COAI and the telecommunications sector at large. The Indian government is supporting and facilitating the Telecom Industry through its proactive policy decisions such as the refarming of 687 MHz of spectrum from the Ministry of Defence, ISRO and the Ministry of Information

and Broadcasting to enhance 5G and future 6G services. Our collective efforts have not only strengthened the industry's foundation but have also set the stage for future innovations. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all members, stakeholders and the Government for their unwavering support and collaboration. Together, we will continue to drive India's digital journey towards a more connected, secure and inclusive future.



From The Director

General's Desk



Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar

Director General, COAI

The year 2024-25 has been pivotal for the Indian telecommunications industry, marked by significant progress in connectivity, policy reforms and technological advancements. The telecom sector has not only played a crucial role in India's digital transformation but has also reinforced its position as a global leader in next-generation connectivity.

Positive Developments of the Year 2024-25

Advancing 5G and Preparations for 6G: India's telecom operators have continued the rapid expansion of 5G infrastructure, resulting in extensive coverage nationwide, ensuring unprecedented digital connectivity. The groundwork for India's leadership in 6G also gained momentum, underscored by the

establishment of additional research labs and collaborative projects between industry leaders and academic institutions.

Regulatory Milestones: The enactment of significant policy reforms, including finalisation of the rules under the Indian Telecommunications Act, provided greater clarity on Right of Way (RoW) guidelines, refarming of the spectrum, increasing the threshold of the EMF norms, etc. This enabled streamlined deployment of telecom infrastructure, significantly easing industry operations and expediting network rollouts.

Green Energy Initiatives: The sector made commendable strides in sustainability with broader adoption of the Green Energy Open Access rules. More states embraced these regulations, enabling telecom operators to leverage renewable energy sources extensively, aligning with India's broader sustainability goals.

Spectrum Allocation and Management: A focused dialogue around the optimal utilization of spectrum resources, particularly the critical 6 GHz band, dominated the industry discussions. Aligning with global best practices, careful consideration was given to spectrum allocation, ensuring India's telecom services remained competitive and resilient.

Digital Inclusion and Regional Growth:

Initiatives aimed at bridging digital divides, particularly in underserved regions like North-East India, gained further traction. Targeted measures proposed by TRAI facilitated enhanced network coverage, driving socio-economic growth and inclusive digital access.

Industry Collaboration and Advocacy: COAI proactively addressed critical issues affecting the sector, particularly the fair-share contribution from large traffic generators (LTGs). Advocacy efforts intensified, highlighting the need for equitable distribution of network infrastructure costs, promoting industry sustainability and balanced growth.

Positive Outcomes to Highlight

- ⦿ **DIGICOM 2025:** COAI organised the first ever DIGICOM Summit 2025 on 17th January 2025, graced by Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister for Communications and other eminent industry leaders. Stakeholders came together for this unique full day conference spanning across 5 sessions to discuss how digital infrastructure is bridging the digital divide and driving equitable growth, ensuring that technological progress reaches and uplifts every section of society, under the theme of "Empowering Viksit Bharat". The event witnessed the participation of more than 200 technology decision makers and industry leaders and was widely covered by media.
- ⦿ **Spectrum Refarming:** COAI applauds the announcement made by the Hon'ble Minister of Communications, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia during the 1st DIGICOM 2025 event, that the ongoing exercise for refarming spectrum for IMT services by a Committee of Secretaries has been completed in the first phase, and that the Cabinet has approved the reallocation of 687 MHz of spectrum for IMT and that they have already allocated the spectrum

that takes our holding to 320 MHz in the first phase.

- ⦿ **Recommendations made by Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology:** The recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and IT to merge MeitY, MIB and DoT under a single umbrella, is expected to improve coordination in handling issues related to technology convergence. Taking the same logic into the operational domain, COAI believes that it would be proper for regulatory and security measures to be put in place for all players, including OTTs and TSPs, to be governed by the same regulatory framework covering spam/fraud messages and calls.
- ⦿ **Bank Guarantee Waiver:** COAI welcomed the Union Cabinet's move on approving the waiving of bank guarantee for telecom operators on spectrum purchased before 2022. This landmark decision will significantly help reduce the financial burden on the telecom operators in the country.
- ⦿ **Credit for taxes and duties paid on towers and its parts:** COAI welcomes the Hon'ble Supreme Court's judgement affirming the telecom industry's entitlement to claim the credit for taxes and duties paid on towers and its parts - including green shelters. The Apex Court's judgement will not only help the industry in fulfilling the compliances, but will also help reduce the financial burden on the sector.
- ⦿ **Transparent communication channels:** In line with the directive issued by TRAI, all commercial messages sent by Principle Entities (PEs) must be fully traceable, effective from December 11, 2024, reinforcing a significant step towards safer and more transparent communication channels.

- ⦿ **Revision of EMF Exposure norms to ICNIRP 2020:** On 01.01.2025, DoT revised the existing EMF Norms in India to 50% of ICNIRP Thresholds. However, COAI will continue its advocacy with DoT that the Indian EMF norms should be aligned to the ICNIRP 2020 guidelines.

Industry Asks

- ⦿ **OTT Communication Services:** The “Security of the Country” is of utmost importance and in this regard, all communication service providers including Over The Top (OTT) based communication services should adhere to the requisite directives (Access Services authorization) under the new framework of the country, as done by the TSPs. Otherwise, this is inherently damaging to all the regulatory efforts to ensure these security paradigms.
- ⦿ **Large Traffic Generators (LTGs):** It is imperative that LTGs who transmit a huge volume of data over the networks established by TSPs, are subjected to a fair and equitable cost-sharing mechanism with the TSPs for upgrading network infrastructure. LTGs must partake in the development of India by contributing a part of their income to the Digital Bharat Nidhi, for progressive development of the industry.
- ⦿ **International SMS Termination Charges:** Indian ITC ranges from INR 0.35-0.65 per minute, whereas global rates (EU up to INR 18/min), are significantly higher. This is a loss to the Indian economy as a whole, and COAI believes that this should be made higher in tandem with globally applicable rates.
- ⦿ **QoS Benchmarks:** The stringent nature of the new QoS regulations introduced by TRAI - including shift from quarterly to monthly reporting and site to cell level reporting in many cases, not taking into account issues like the disobedience on RoW rules and street furniture for 5G, interference from various sources, illegal boosters and

repeaters used by unauthorised agents, theft of equipment, besides, frequent takedown of the overhead fiber by the authorities is disappointing for COAI.

- ⦿ **TCCCPR 2018:** TRAI’s amendment of the TCCCPR, 2018 to strengthen consumer protection against UCC, does not address relevant issues like bringing the PEs and TMs with Delivery/Aggregator Function and OTT communication providers under regulation to manage unlawful communications and that the telecom operators should not be penalized for unwarranted actions of some other subscribers.
- ⦿ **Framework for Service Authorisations:** COAI firmly believes that the authorization process must continue to retain the contractual nature of the present licenses, as this will ensure uniformity, regulatory certainty and protection to investors who commit long-term capital to the sector.
- ⦿ **AGR based payments:** COAI is of the opinion that the payments made basis the Adjusted Gross Revenue (i.e. License Fees, inclusive of USOF) by TSPs to the Government, needs to be reconsidered under the changed regime and circumstances, as TSPs pay a huge sum during the auction of spectrum and then also pay AGR on the same. Therefore, it needs to be revisited.
- ⦿ **SATCOM regulation:** SATCOM should be used for enhancing the coverage in uncovered rural areas and there should be a level playing field between Terrestrial Service Providers and Satellite Communication Service Providers in all other areas.

Way Forward

The Indian telcos are increasingly adopting green networks, which focus on energy-efficient operations, carbon emission reductions and the use of renewable energy sources. Moreover, innovative 5G applications like IoT, smart grids,

precision agriculture, among others, will further contribute to our nation's sustainability goals. This is in addition to the efficiencies to be driven via use of 5G across diverse sectors like healthcare, education, transport, manufacturing, logistics, mining, etc., which will take us closer to achieving the country's sustainability goals.

In the coming year, COAI expects cybersecurity to become a key priority for telcos as the number of connected devices increase and cyberattacks rise. With growing regulatory demands and increasing customer awareness around privacy, telecom companies will have to invest heavily in cybersecurity solutions to safeguard network integrity and data security. Both technological advancements and human factors will play key roles in enhancing network resilience, ensuring that telcos can meet the demands of an increasingly digital world.

The technological advancements in generative AI, cloud-native networks and industry convergence will also help shape the telecom landscape globally. With Generative AI, telecom companies will be able to offer hyper-personalized services, improving customer experience with tailored data plans and device recommendations. The shift to cloud-native networks, using containerization, virtualization and microservices, will help deliver greater flexibility and scalability, supporting emerging use cases in areas of smart cities and autonomous driving. Telecom will also become a catalyst for industry convergence, enabling innovations around autonomous vehicles and virtual healthcare

through secure, high-bandwidth networks, presenting new growth opportunities for operators.

The Association's Updates

The COAI Executive Council – headed by Chairman - Mr. Abhijit Kishore, Vice Chairman - Mr. Rahul Vatts and comprising senior representatives from our member operators are an integral part of the progress that the Association has been making. My special thanks to the Chairman and the Vice Chairman for their commitment and active involvement in the activities and initiatives of the Association, and we look forward to their continued support and guidance going forward.

The Executive Council was also ably assisted by professional advice from the various Working Committees set up in COAI. I express my gratitude and appreciation to all the Committees and Working Groups, their Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, for providing their unstinted support and cooperation, and taking out time from their busy schedules to contribute to various industry issues and help the association represent itself in a proficient manner.

Last but not the least, I would like to place on record my deep gratitude to the COAI Secretariat team, which has always provided excellent support, dedication and assistance in all our endeavours. I deeply appreciate their efforts in contributing significantly to all the achievements of COAI.

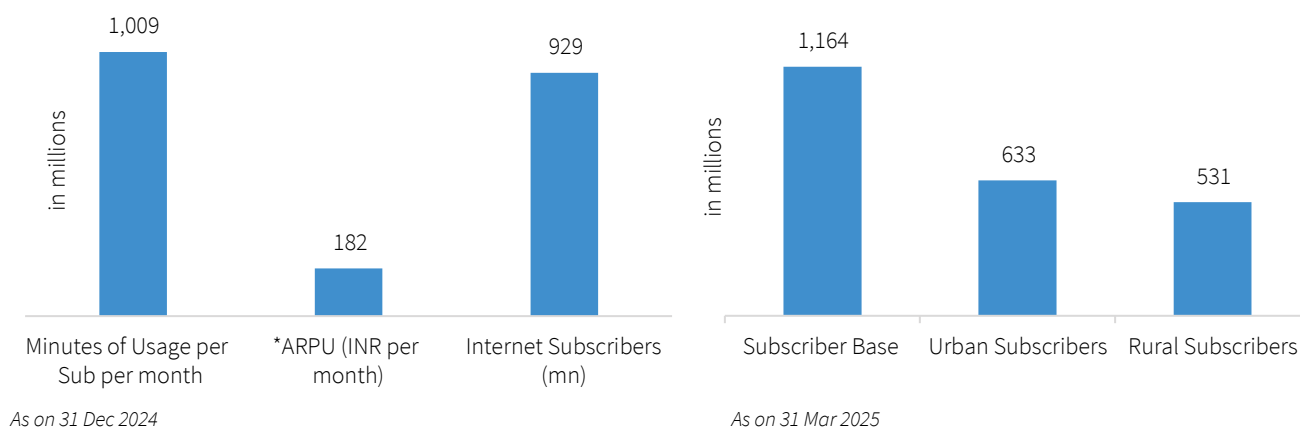


06

Indian Wireless Industry – An Overview

INDIA TRENDS

A. Wireless Industry in India - Snapshot

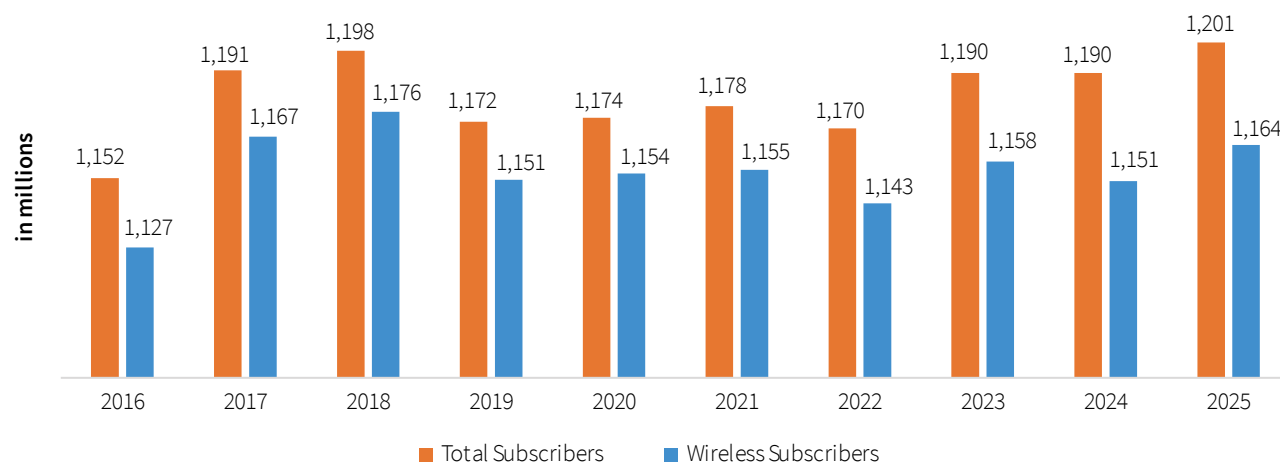


Source: TRAI

Note: *ARPU arrived after adjusting interconnect usage charges and roaming settlement charges.

2025 Wireless figure includes 5G FWA subscriptions also

B. All India Total & Wireless Subscribers

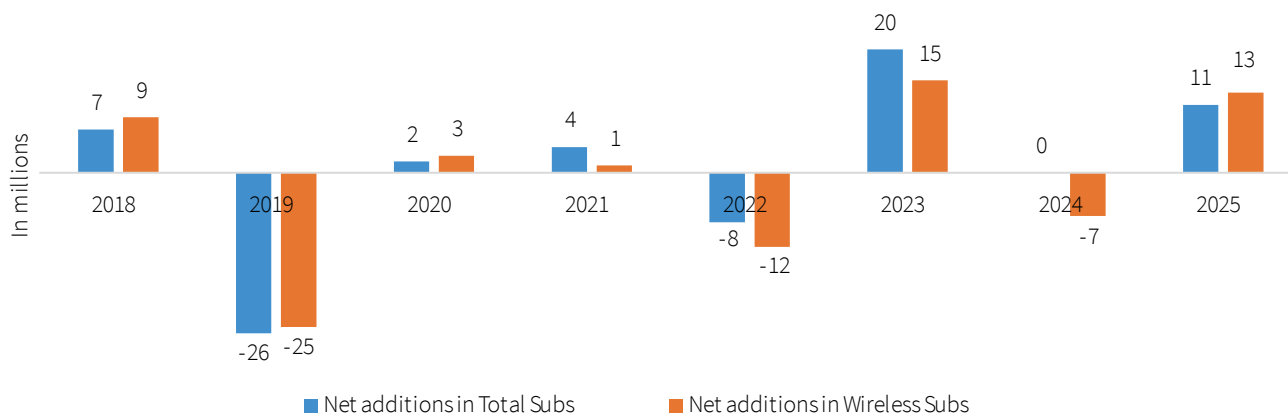


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2025, which is as of 31 Mar 2025

2025 Wireless figure includes 5G FWA subscriptions also.

C. All India Total & Wireless Subscribers - Annual Net Additions

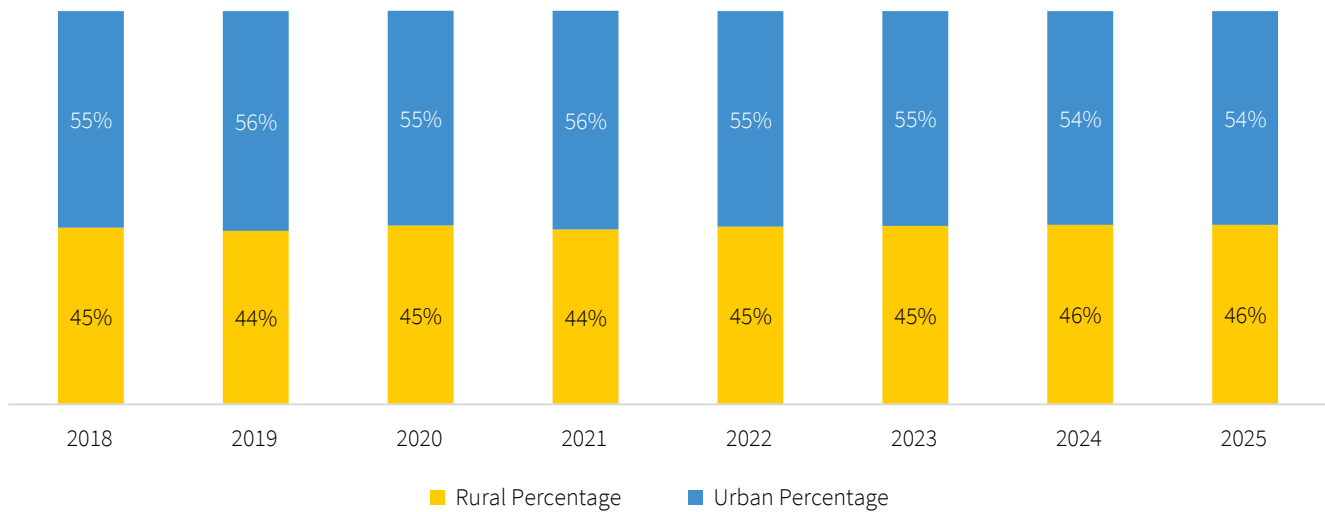


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2025, which is till 31 Mar 2025

2025 Wireless figure includes 5G FWA subscriptions also.

D. Wireless - Rural & Urban Subs as % of Total Wireless Subs

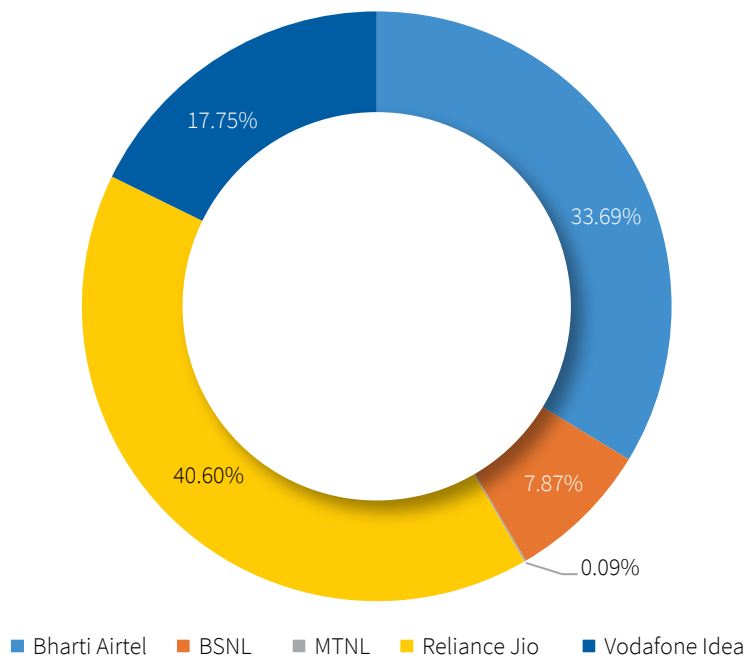


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2025, which is as of 31 Mar 2025

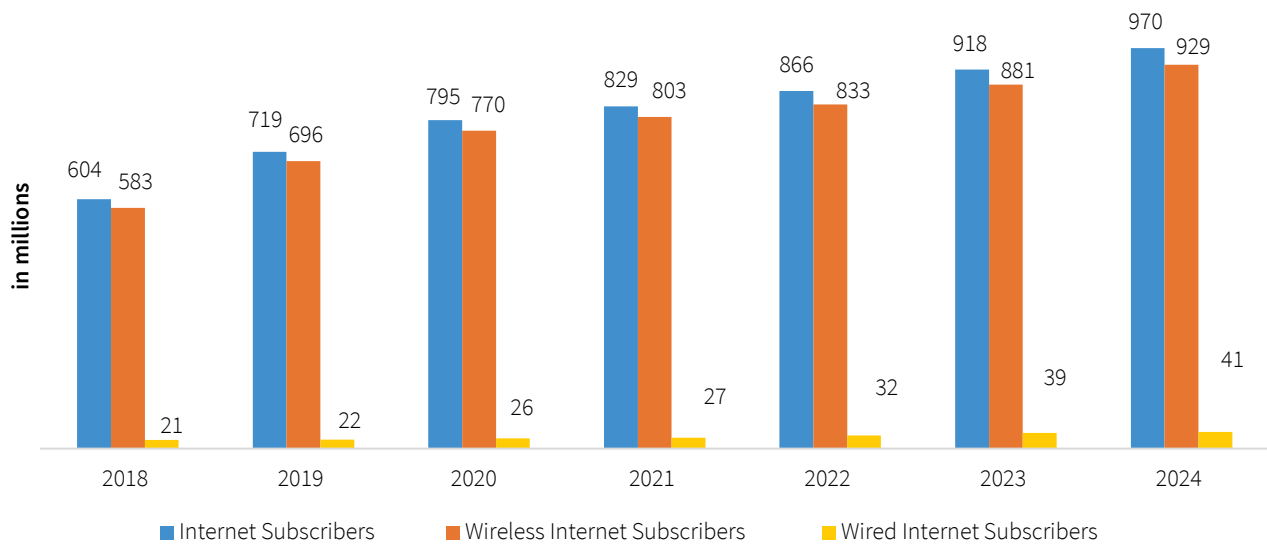
2025 Wireless figure includes 5G FWA subscriptions also.

E. Subscriber Market Share of Wireless Operators (Mar 2025)



Source: TRAI

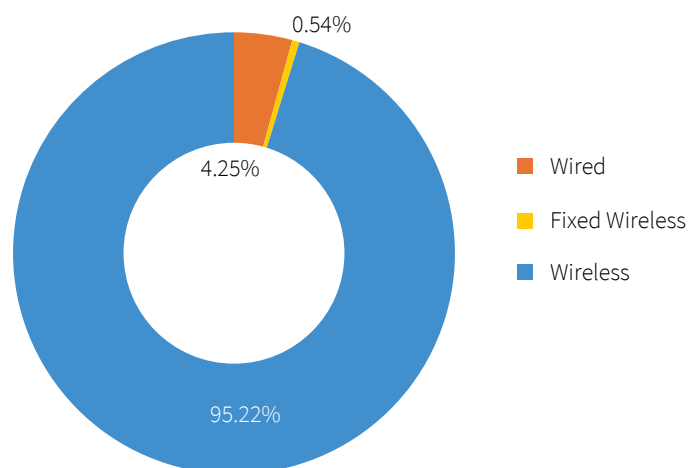
F. All India Total, Wireless & Wired Internet Subscribers



Source: TRAI

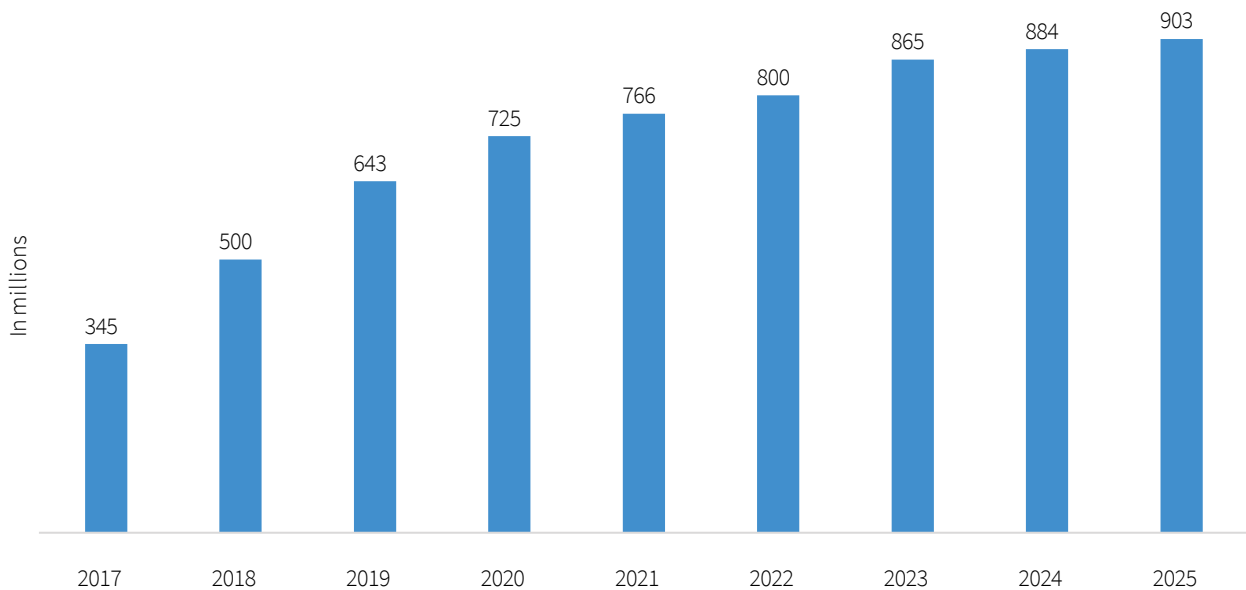
Note: Figures are as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

G. Composition of Internet Subscribers – Dec 2024



Source: TRAI

H. Wireless Broadband Subscribers

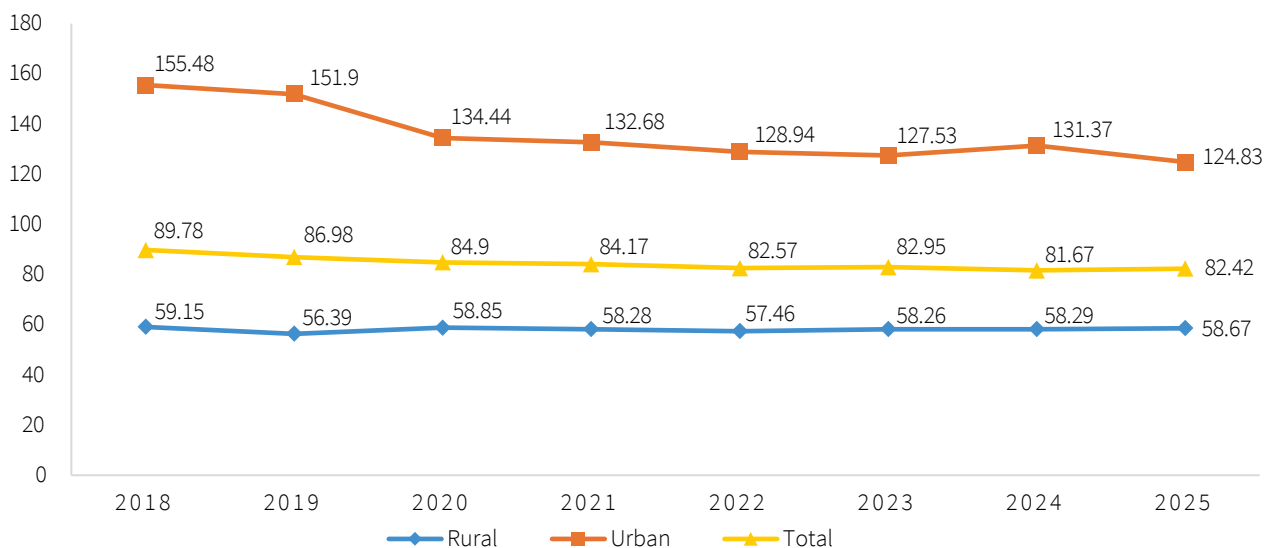


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2025 which is as of 31 Mar 2025

2025 Wireless figure includes 5G FWA subscriptions also.

I. Total Wireless Teledensity (%)

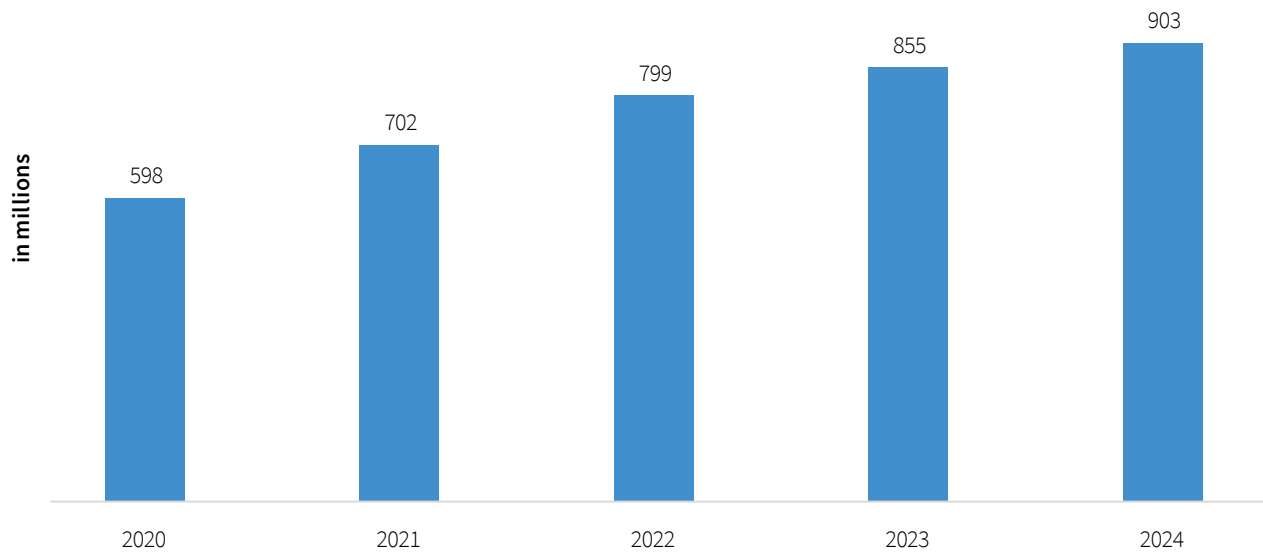


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2025 which is as of 31 Mar 2025

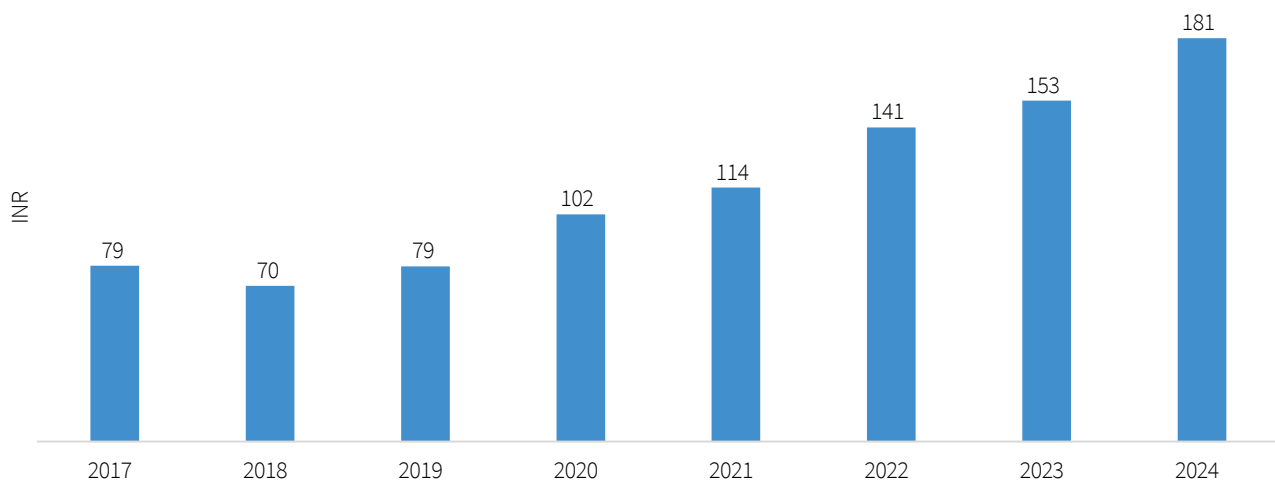
2025 Wireless figure includes 5G FWA subscriptions also.

J. Data Subs (4G+5G)



Source: Nokia Mbit Report 2025, Operator Quarterly results, TRAI
 Figures for the years 2022-2024 include 5G Subscribers.

K. Monthly ARPU of Wireless Services

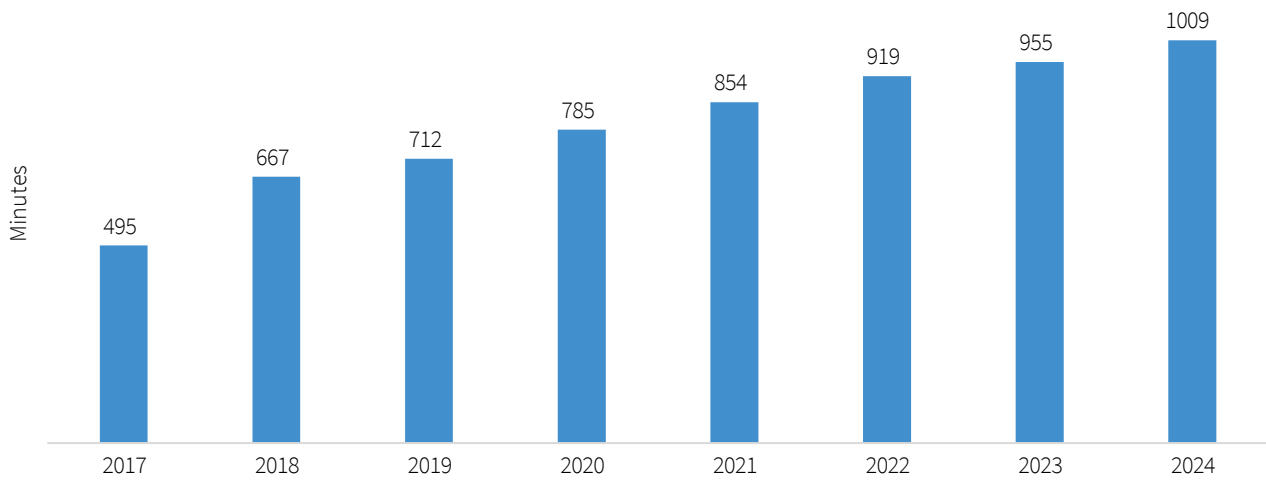


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

ARPU arrived at after adjusting interconnect usage charges and roaming settlement charges.

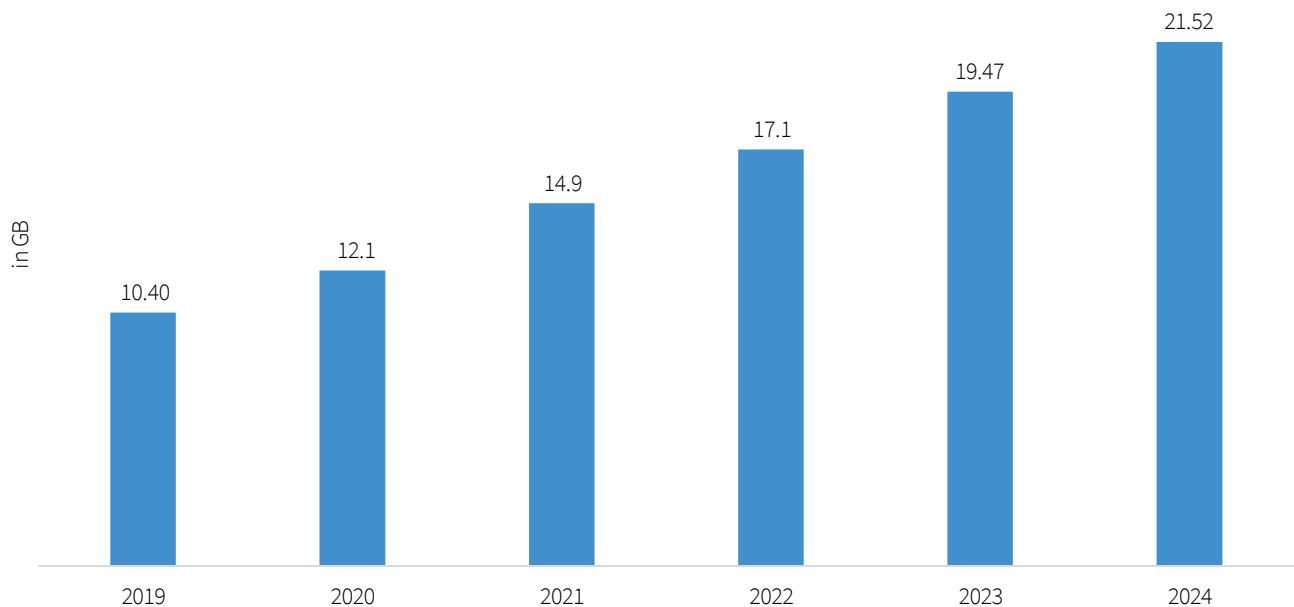
L. Minutes of Usage (Voice Calls) per Subscriber per month – Wireless



Source: TRAI PIR

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

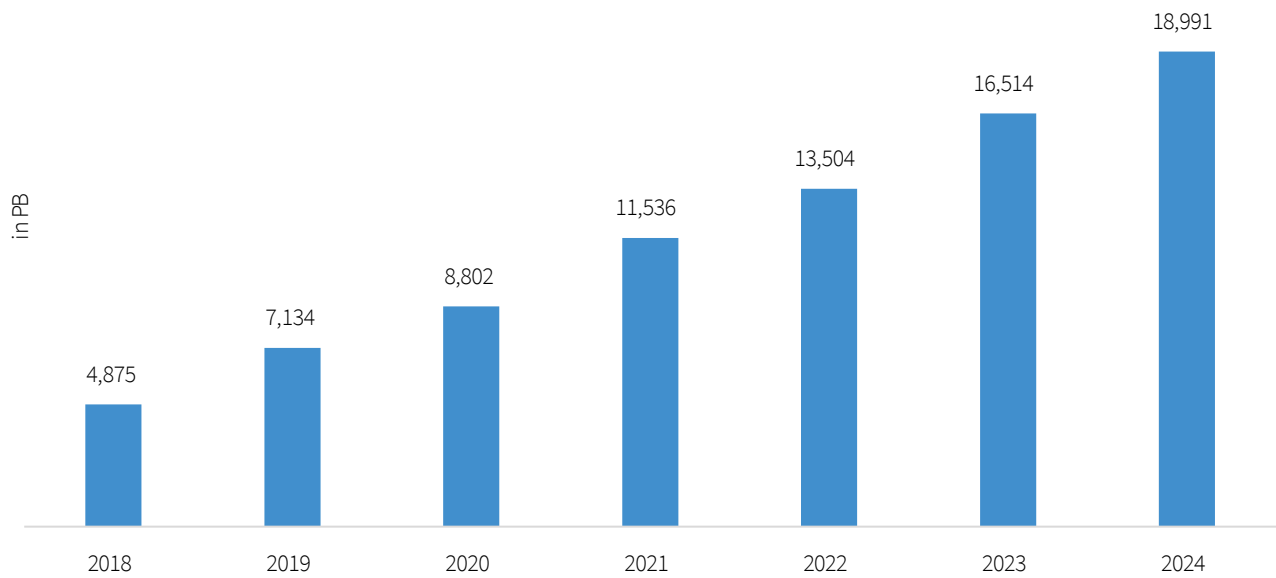
M. Wireless Data usage per sub/month (in GB)



Source: TRAI PIR

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

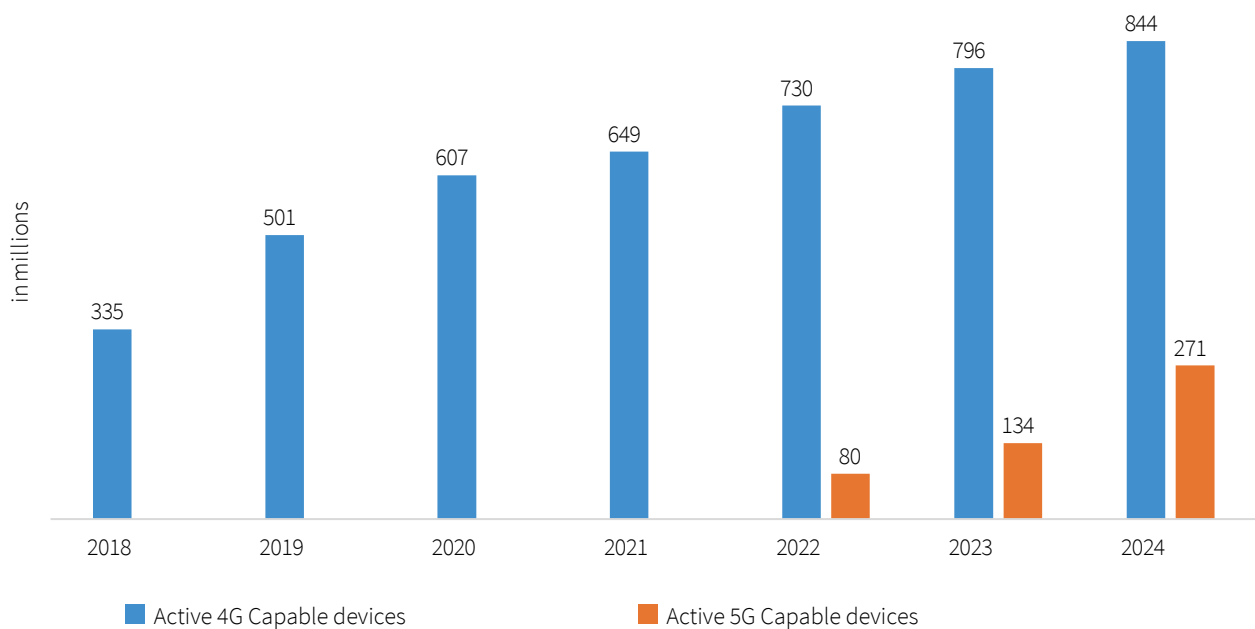
N. Total Wireless Data Usage (in PB) per month



Source: TRAI PIR

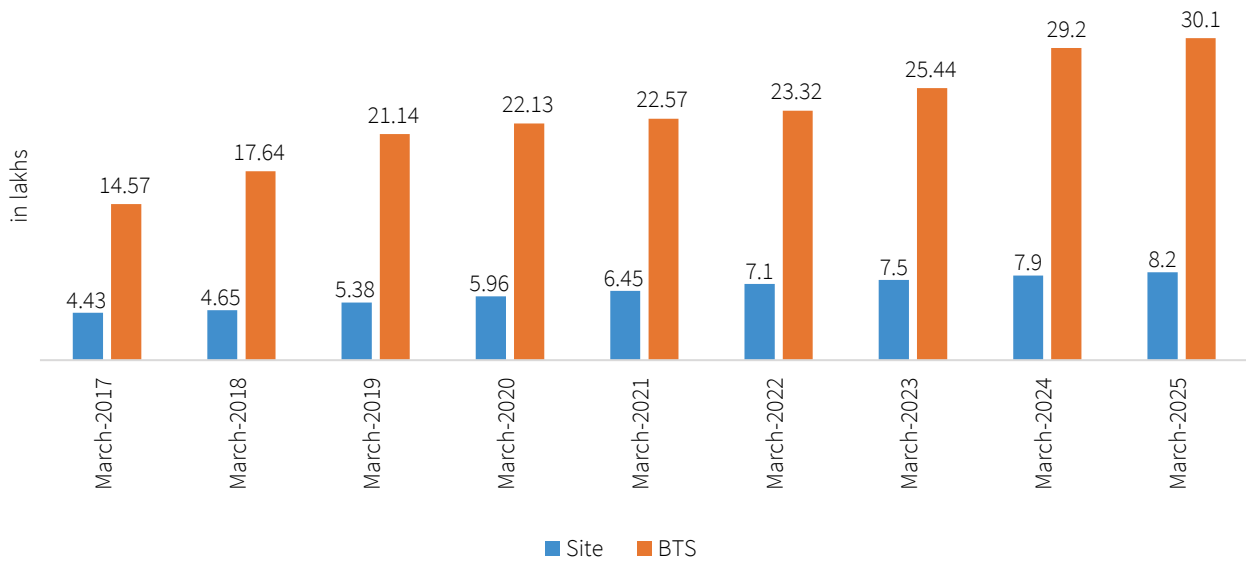
Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

O. Active 4G & 5G capable Devices



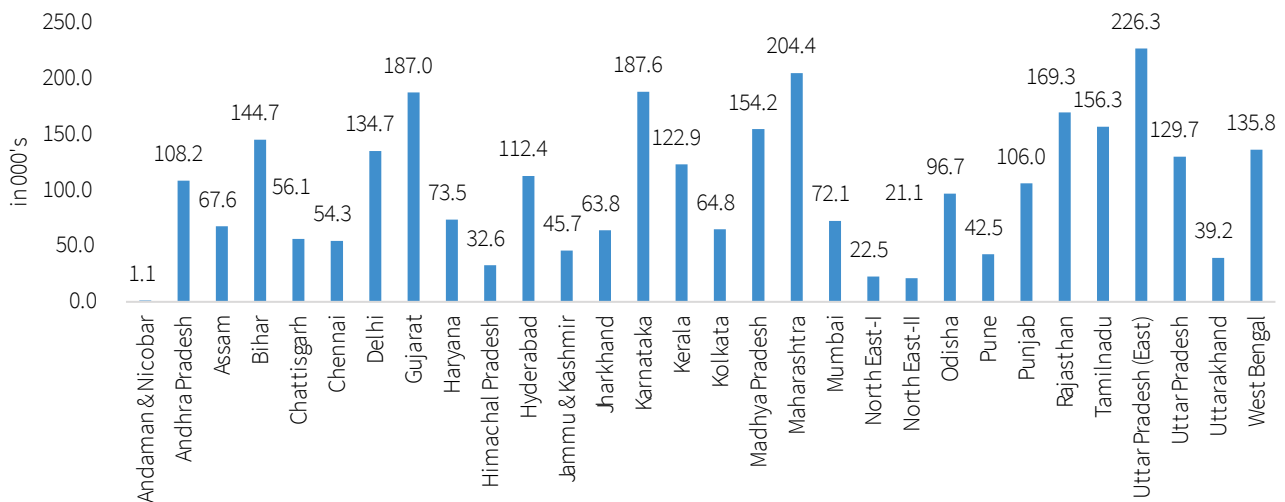
Source: Nokia MBiT Report 2025; Active 4G capable devices are inclusive of Active 5G capable devices

P. Total Number of Sites and BTS



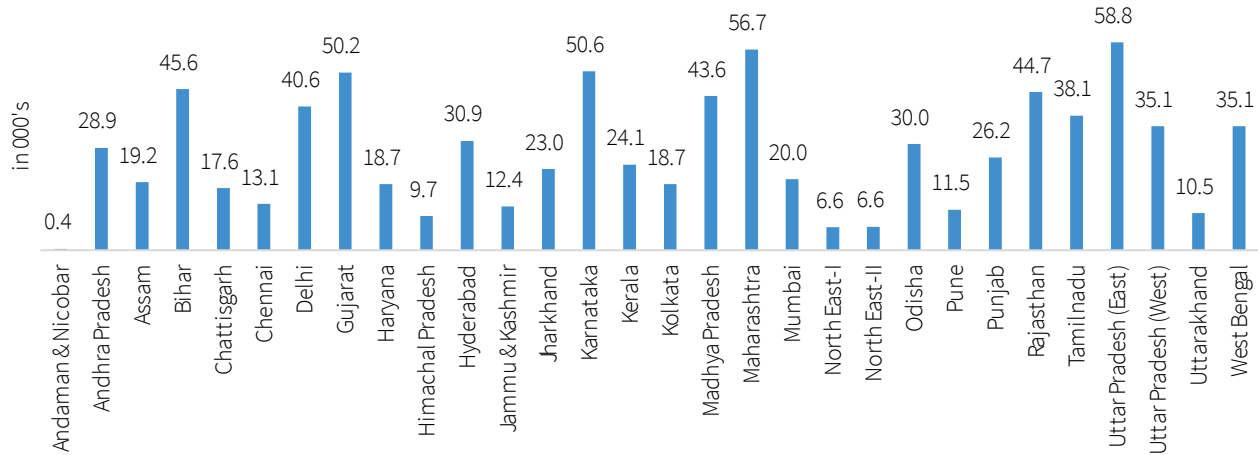
Source: Tarang Sanchar

Q. BTS (State-wise)



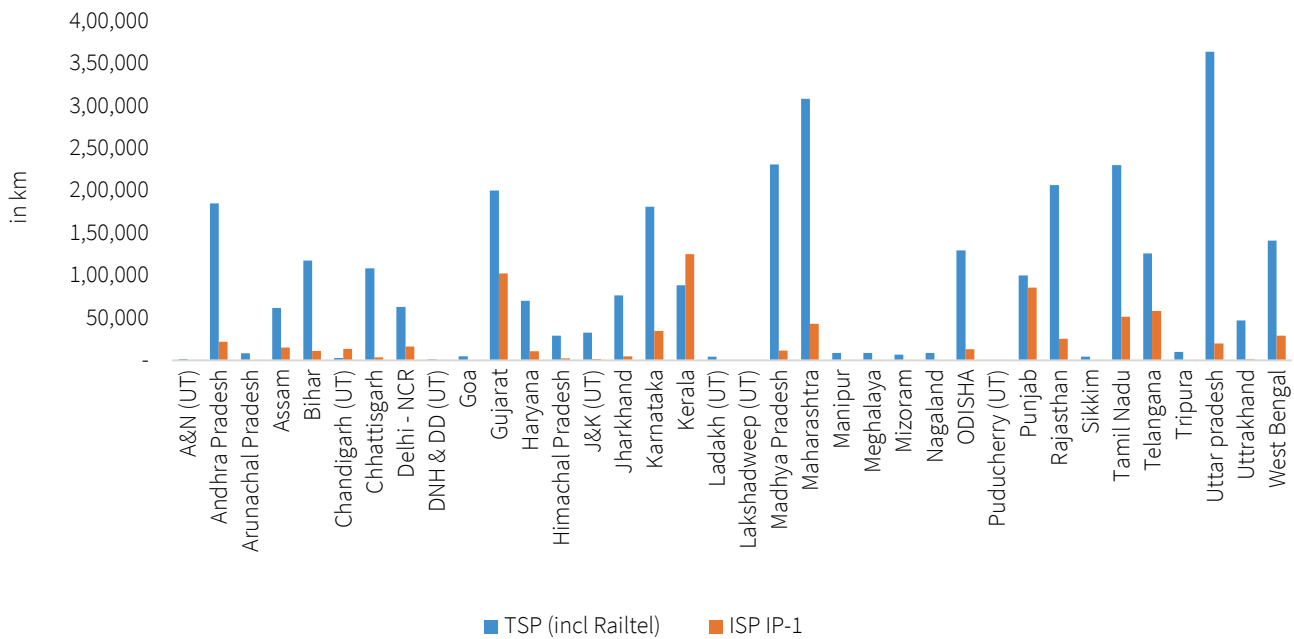
Source: Ramboll

R. Towers (State-wise)



Source: Ramboll

S. Optical Fibre Laid



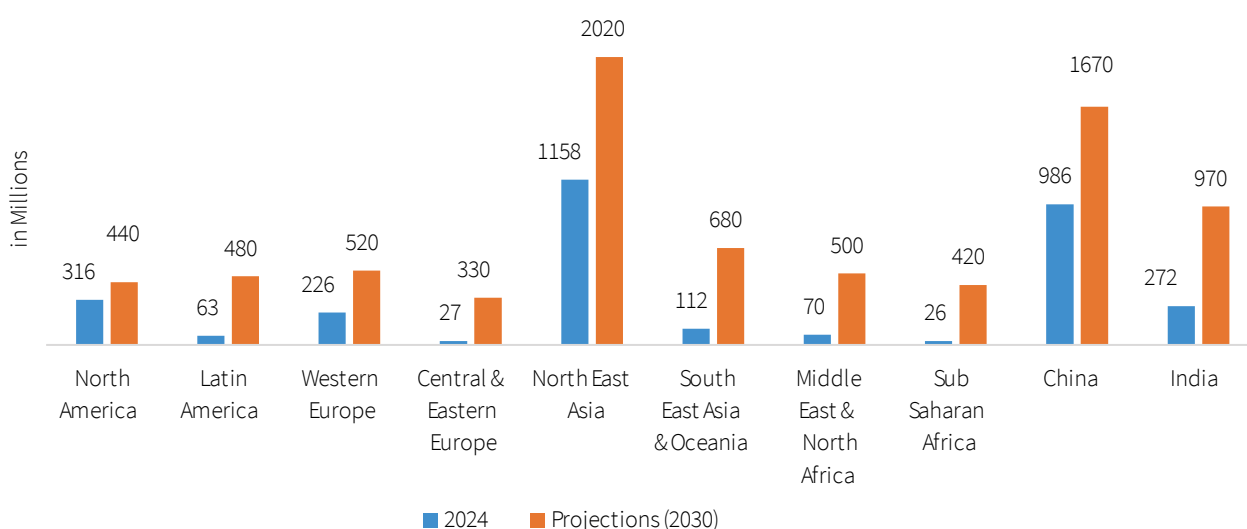
Source: Ramboll

07

International Trends

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

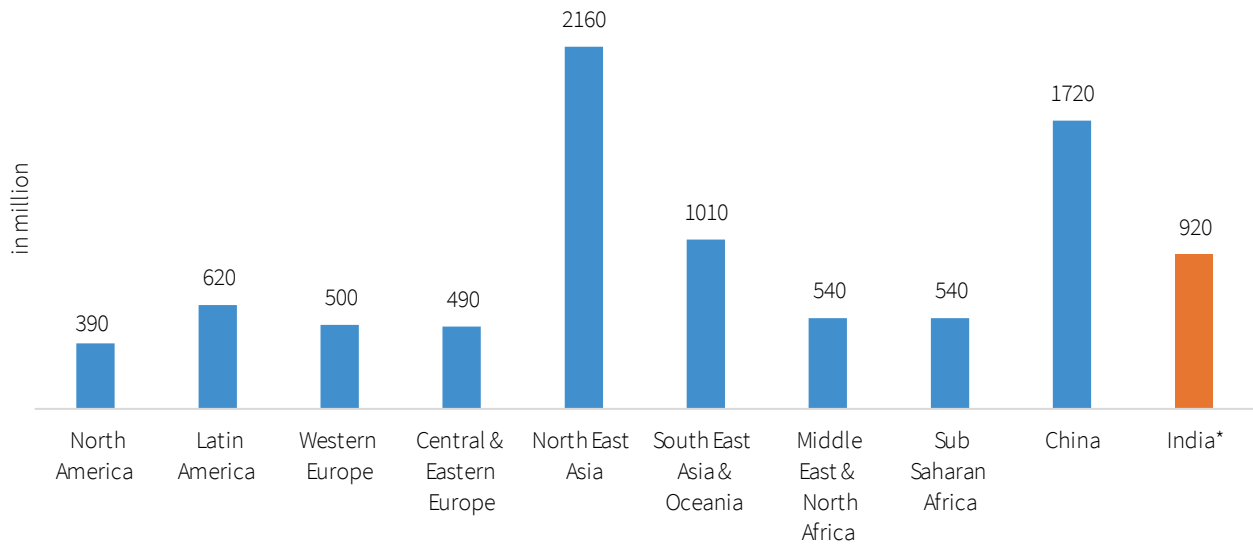
A. 5G Subscriptions



Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2024), Worldometer (2025)

Note: India data includes Nepal & Bhutan

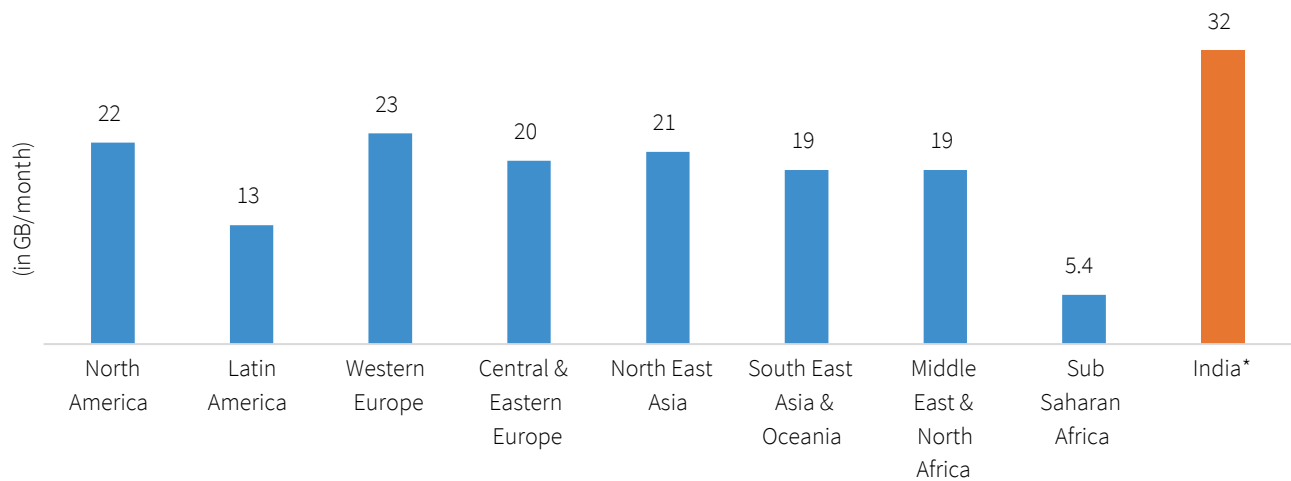
B. Smartphone Users



Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2024)

Note: India data includes Nepal & Bhutan

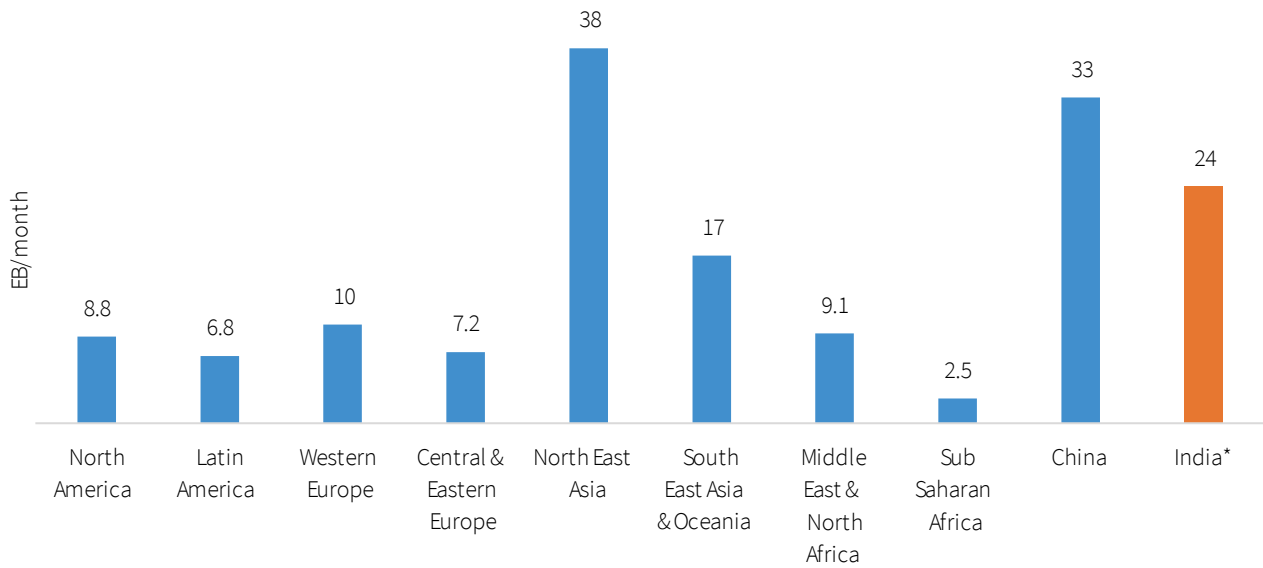
C. Mobile data traffic per smartphone



Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2024)

*India data includes Nepal & Bhutan

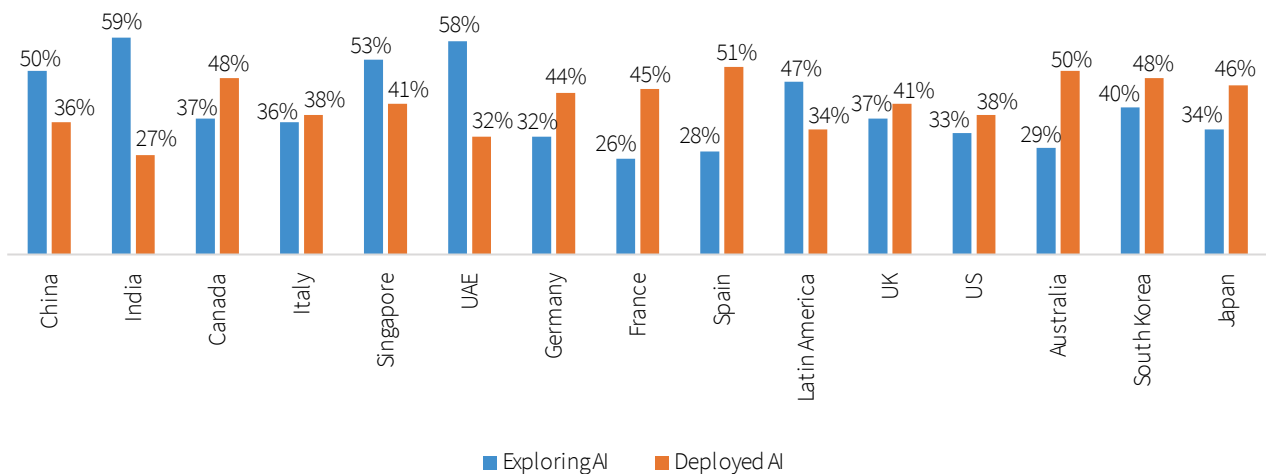
D. Global Mobile data traffic



Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2024)

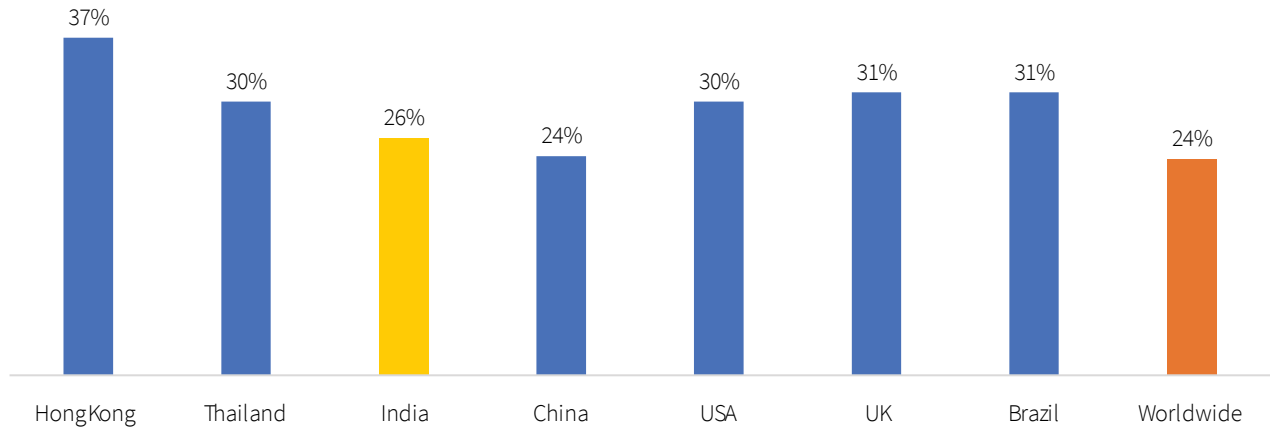
*Note: India data includes Nepal & Bhutan

E. AI Preparedness by Country



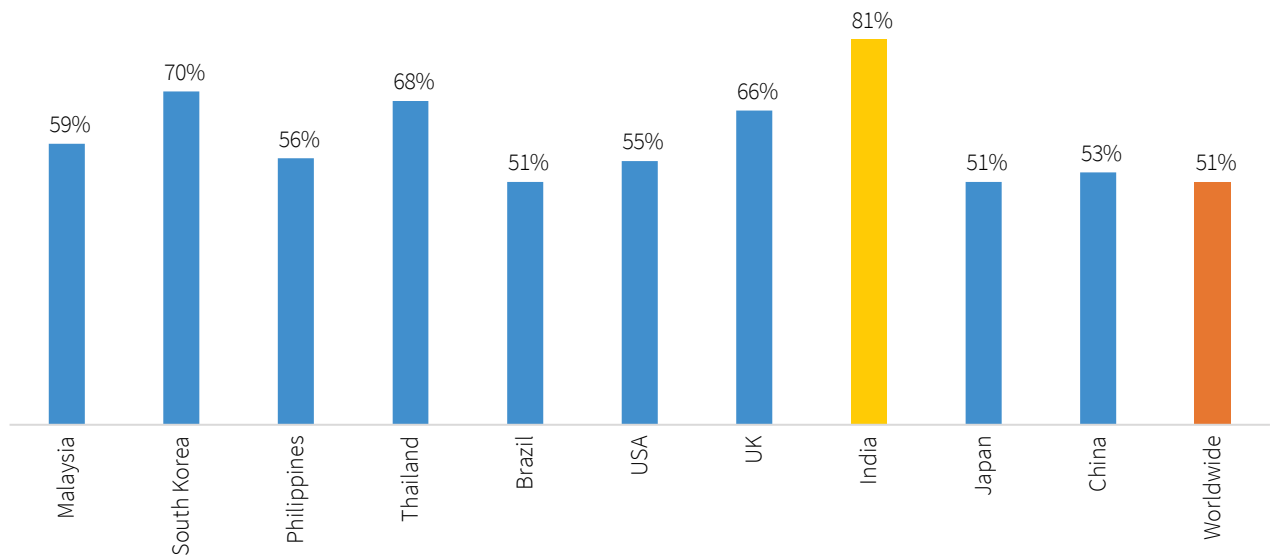
Source: Demandsage 2025

F. Mobile Payment platform users as % of total Internet users



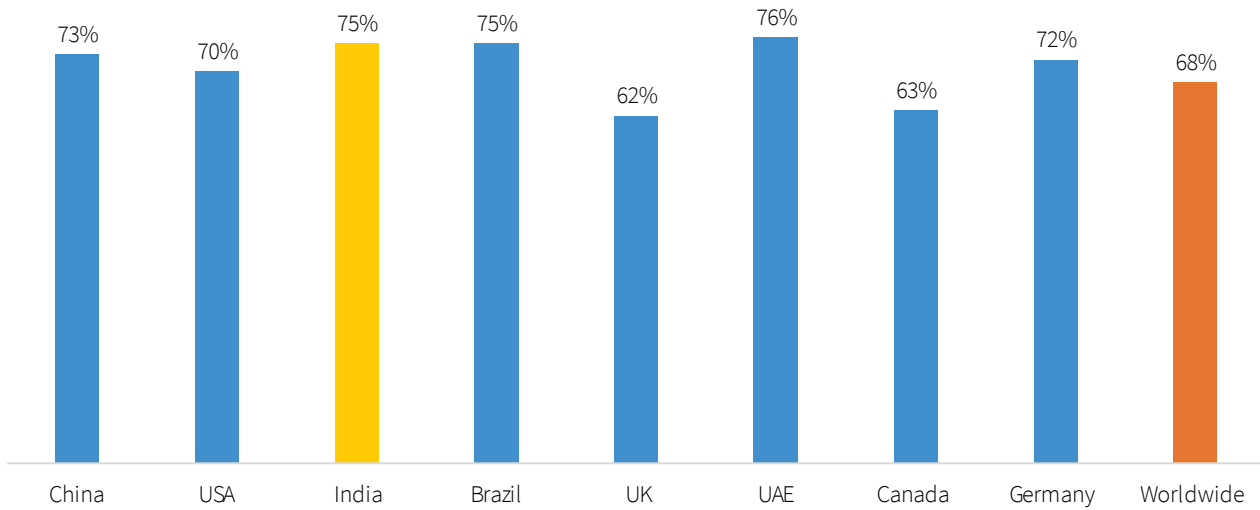
Source: Digital 2025 Global Overview Report

G. Mobile E-commerce purchase via a mobile



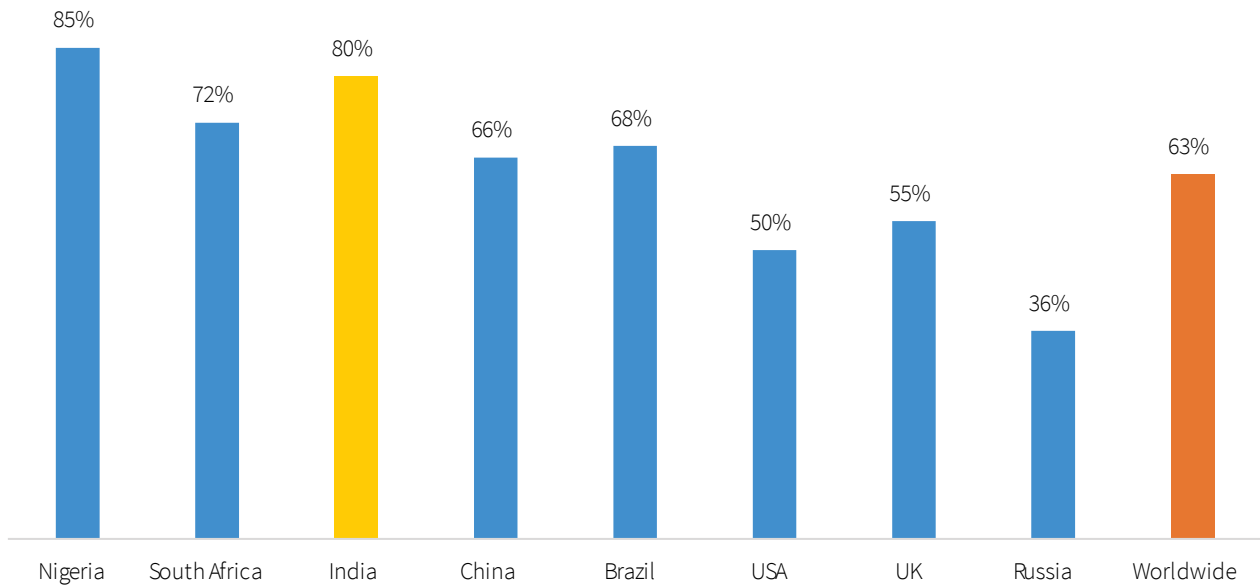
Source: Digital 2025 Global Overview Report

H. % of Internet Users who purchase any type of digital content in a month



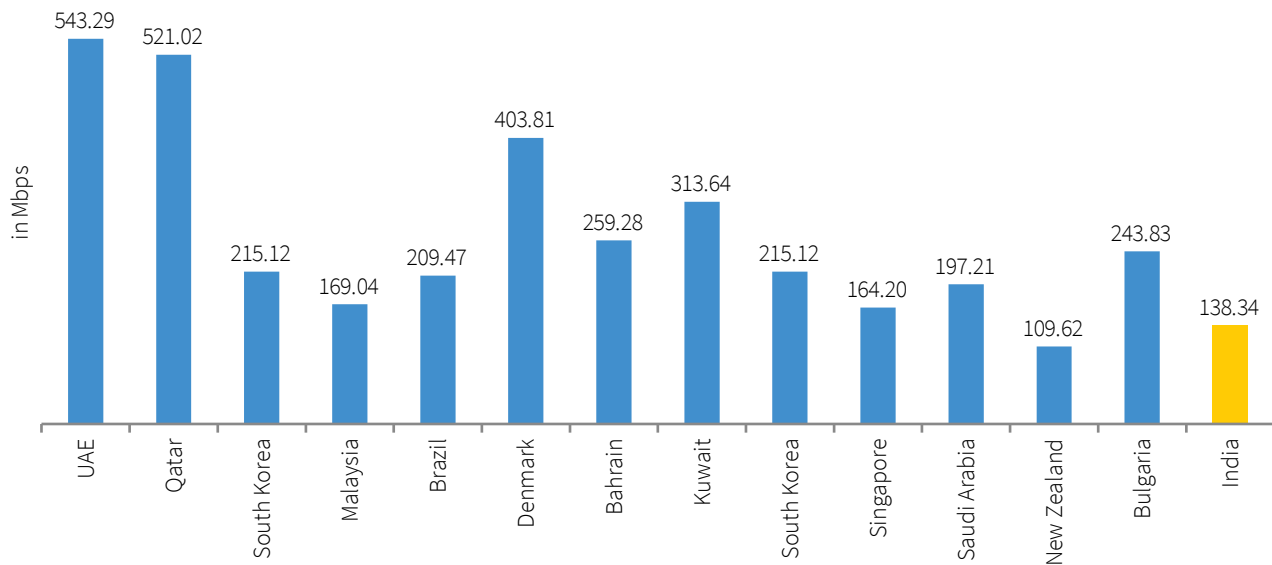
Source: Digital 2025 Global Overview Report

I. Mobile's Share of Web Traffic



Source: Digital 2025 Global Overview Report

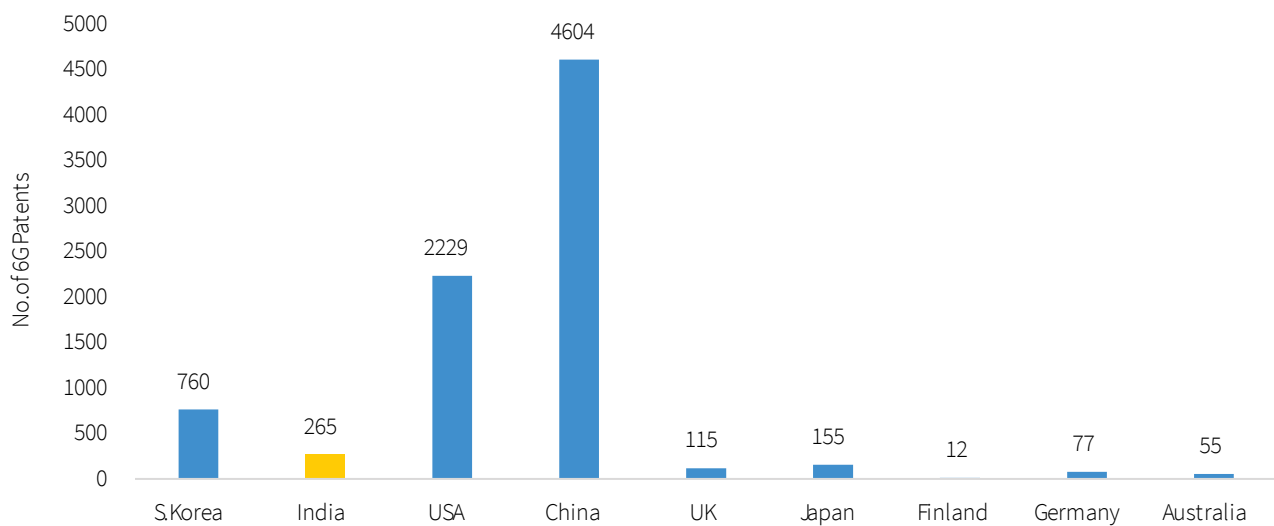
J. Mobile Broadband Speed Performance



Source: Speedtest Global Index

Note: Data is of March 2025

K. 6G Development



Source: Straits Research 2025



08

Significant Achievements for the year 2024-25

1. DIGICOM Summit 2025

The DIGICOM Summit, organised by COAI was graced by Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister for Communications; Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti, TRAI Chairman and other industry leaders with over 18 representatives from leading media outlets attending the event. The event witnessed 30+ key speakers participating across several important keynote sessions and 5 panel discussions. Attended by 200+ industry leaders, the event discussed how digital infrastructure is bridging the digital divide and driving equitable growth, ensuring that technological progress reaches and uplifts every section of society, under the theme of "Empowering Viksit Bharat". The keynotes and session discussions by industry leaders were across topics like telecom and digital infrastructure, policy & regulations, 5G ecosystem, emerging technologies, Make in India initiative, impact on livelihood, role of academia, digital connectivity, citizen empowerment, internet of things, edge computing, interconnected machines and innovations

fostering inclusivity and enabling sustainability. The Summit received wide media coverage based on the compelling storylines and developments that emerged in the discussions.

2. Time of Supply for payment of GST on Spectrum Payments

Certain State GST Offices issued letters to Telcos questioning why GST should not be paid on the entire bid amount payable for spectrum allocation, irrespective of the payment option adopted by the operators. This was despite being aware of the fact that spectrum allocation is a clear-cut case of 'continuous supply of services' where its usage is allotted for a period of 20 years with periodic payments being made, which has been laid down in the Notice Inviting Application (NIA). It is pertinent to note that the impact of this on the industry is approximately ₹22,000 crore. The government has issued a suitable clarification, vide its notification provided substantial relief to the industry thereby facilitating improved cash flow management and reducing litigation.

3. GST Reform on Spectrum Charges

COAI has successfully advocated for a significant reform on how GST is applied to spectrum auction payments. Previously, telecom service providers (TSPs) faced the burden of paying 18% GST upfront on the entire spectrum cost. Through persistent engagement with the Government, COAI has secured a key policy change: GST is now payable only on the actual instalment paid each year, substantially reducing the immediate tax burden on operators. Additionally, TSPs can now claim Input Tax Credit (ITC) on the GST paid for spectrum instalments, which can be offset against their other GST liabilities, effectively reducing the net GST outflow over time. Moreover, in auctions where the government provides a two-year moratorium on spectrum payments (such as the 2022 and 2023 auctions), no GST is charged during this period since no payment is due. When payments resume after the moratorium, GST is applied only on the principal amount plus any applicable interest. This reform represents a substantial financial benefit for the telecom industry, estimated to have saved approximately INR 24,000 crore in the 2022 spectrum auctions alone.

4. Input Tax Credits on ducts and manholes used in networks of OFC

Initially, under the GST regime, the Government did not explicitly permit TSPs to claim ITC on ducts and manholes, categorizing them as part of land or immovable property — excluded from ITC under Section 17(5)(d) of the CGST Act. COAI actively engaged with relevant ministries, advocating for the necessary GST modifications required. As a result, the Government amended the rules, allowing ITC on ducts and manholes used in telecom infrastructure, including OFC networks. These changes were formalized through CBIC notifications and clarifications. The amendment is projected to provide ~INR 15,000 crore in relief to the telecom industry, strengthening digital infrastructure development in India. Key Benefits for the Telecom Sector

would include Faster 5G & Fiber Rollout with improved cash flow and reduced tax burdens accelerating network deployments, Cost Reduction as TSPs can now claim ITC on critical OFC infrastructure, lowering capital expenditure and Reduced Litigation with clarity on ITC eligibility minimizing disputes and compliance uncertainties.

5. Matter filed by DoT for retrospective payment of delayed WPC charges

DoT appealed against TDSAT's judgment dated 19 November 2009, which set aside retrospective interest/penalty on TSPs' delayed WPC charges. Demands for Interest/penalty were raised in 2006 for 1999–2001 WPC dues. TDSAT struck down a notification imposing a 150% penalty with retrospective effect and ruled that any license agreement amendment must be unilaterally accepted, and that DoT's penalty clause is unauthorized by contract and law. The matter got dismissed as DoT was not available to represent its case and hence, the Hon'ble Supreme Court dismissed the Appeal due to non-prosecution.

6. Refarming of Spectrum

At the DIGICOM Summit organized by COAI in January 2025, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister for Communications, announced the refarming of spectrum for IMT services in the country. Previously, COAI had consistently made representations to the DoT, requesting the allocation of a minimum of 2 GHz of spectrum in the mid-band to enhance 5G coverage and support future 6G-related services in India. The Union Cabinet has approved the refarming of 687 MHz of spectrum, with 320 MHz to be released immediately. In this regard, the refarming of 687 MHz brings the total available mid-band spectrum to 1,587 MHz (including the 900 MHz already available with TSPs), marking a significant step towards inclusivity and expansion of mobile services across the country.

7. Matter against wrongful calculation of Spectrum Usage Charge to TSPs

This petition challenged the demand notes issued after DoT incorrectly rejected the TSP's SUC rates for the 2.1 GHz spectrum in 2010. The NIA stated that the slab rate for standalone 3G operators shall be equal to the lowest slab rate in Schedule A, i.e., 3% of Adjusted Gross Revenues (AGR). But the DoT's demand notices calculated an inflated rate based on the weighted average SUC amount. The Industry has received a stay against DoT's demand notices for certain circles, however, additional demand notices were received by TSPs for other circles. Aggrieved by the wrongfully issued demand notices, COAI filed an application on behalf of one of its members, followed by a separate petition from another member before the Hon'ble TDSAT. The Hon'ble tribunal reviewed the previous orders in COAI's main Petition and issued interim orders in favour of both the TSPs.

8. Identification of Spectrum for IMT in NFAP Review/Revision Committee

COAI contributed to all three Working Groups of the NFAP Committee – WG-1 (< 1 GHz), WG-2 (1-6 GHz) and WG-3 (6 GHz & above). COAI presented its inputs during the meetings of the Working Groups on the IND Footnotes, advocating in favor of IMT services in the country. COAI's inputs supporting the promotion of IMT services were duly considered by the Committee. As part of the review of the NFAP spectrum in the 6425–7025 MHz and 7025–7125 MHz bands, the spectrum has been identified for IMT usage with an IND footnote.

9. Extension of Timeline for Registration of M2M Service Providers

COAI has been constantly advocating with DoT, seeking extension of timeline for Registration of M2M Service Providers as these entities

cater to the critical services being carried out in the country. In this regard, COAI made representations to DoT from time to time, wherein Member (Technology), DDG (NT) were met and extensions granted. As a result, over the past one year, there has been a sharp increase in Registered M2M Entities from approx. 1100 to over 4000 entities.

10. Revision of EMF Exposure norms to ICNIRP 2020

COAI has been consistently advocating with DoT to ensure that India's EMF exposure limits for BTS are fully aligned (100%) with the ICNIRP guidelines. In this regard, COAI has made several representations to DoT from time to time, including a meeting with Member (T), DoT. As a result, DoT issued an order dated January 1, 2025, increasing India's EMF norms to 50% of the ICNIRP thresholds (f/400). However, the industry continues to advocate for full alignment with the ICNIRP 2020 guidelines to facilitate seamless 5G deployment in line with 137 countries worldwide.

11. EMF Awareness

COAI has been actively involved in driving EMF awareness initiatives to address public concerns and promote information regarding EMF safety. The committee collaborated with the LSAs, the field units of the Department of Telecommunications, to conduct awareness workshops, including one program in the national television broadcaster, Doordarshan, highlighting that telecom networks operate well within the prescribed EMF safety limits set by the Government of India and there are no known ill effects from EMF emissions. These efforts have contributed to building public confidence and ensuring transparency.

12. Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE and Communication Security (ComSEC) Scheme

COAI, through its ongoing and regular engagement with the Government authorities, has consistently advocated for the resolution of industry challenges related to the implementation of product testing under the MTCTE and ComSeC framework. The objective has been to ensure seamless execution of testing processes while safeguarding the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) in the telecom sector.

A key concern raised by COAI pertains to ComSeC requirements, specifically the mandate for submission of source code and internal test reports to designated testing labs (NCCS). COAI highlighted that such requirements are not aligned with global best practices and recommended that these obligations be reconsidered or exempted to maintain industry competitiveness and operational confidentiality. Following multiple rounds of discussions and deliberations with the concerned Government officials, COAI's efforts have resulted in a positive development. The release of NCCS notification has granted an extension for the submission of source code and internal test reports until 31st December 2025. Additionally, the Government has agreed to accept applications for the issuance of a "Pro-Tem Certificate" to facilitate interim compliance and ensure continuity of operations for the industry during this transitional period.

13. Definition of International Traffic

TRAI issued the Consultation Paper on "Definition of International Traffic" on 2nd May 2023, to which COAI submitted its detailed response by 12th July 2023, suggesting that the definition of International Traffic is already mentioned in the UL agreement. Furthermore, the definition of International Traffic has been mentioned in the Code of Practice (CoP) which is submitted to TRAI and should be continued.

TRAI issued Recommendations on the same on 10th December 2024, wherein the COAI's submissions were accepted by TRAI. The recommendations favorable to COAI's members are highlighted below:

- a. TRAI Recommended the definitions of International Traffic and International SMS in COAI's favor. The Authority stated that any incoming message, which cannot be generated, transmitted or received without the use or intervention of any electronic device, computer system or computer application located outside India, shall be treated as International SMS.
- b. Regarding definition of Domestic Traffic and Domestic SMS, the Authority's Recommendations are in alignment with the industry's view, i.e., the traffic originating and terminating within India.

The above Recommendations are in alignment with COAI's submission and would provide much-needed clarity to the definitions and will help in curbing the entities trying to bypass the ILDO gateway.

14. Right of Way Rules 2024 and National Broadband Mission 2.0

COAI played a key role in providing industry feedback on the draft of the Right of Way (RoW) Rules 2024, which was notified in the gazette on 17 September 2024, resulting in simplified, enabling business and universally applicable rules which have defined processes, rationalized charges and are digital by design — enabling faster and cost-effective approvals for telecom infrastructure deployment. 24 States and Union Territories have notified these rules which will remove the ambiguity of charges which are envisaged to be standard and uniform across the country, thereby bringing in predictability and reducing overall financial outflow. The Telecom Infrastructure Committee of COAI actively worked with stakeholders and provided constructive inputs for the formulation of the National Broadband Mission (NBM) 2.0, launched on 17 January 2025, by the Hon'ble Minister of Communication, which supports India's aspiration of becoming a digital economy. The Mission will further enhance the support to the telecommunication industry by facilitating smoother network rollout and addressing

challenges related to infrastructure readiness, fiberization targets and digital connectivity expansion.

15. Energy facilitation

COAI has been engaging with regulatory bodies to enable access to Green Energy for telecom networks. With continuous persuasion, 27 States and Union Territories have adopted the amended Green Open Access rules, supporting the industry's ask in using renewable energy. The industry is also closely working with various states in the country for implementation of a Composite Billing and payment mechanism,

which helps in improving efficiency and avoiding unwarranted delayed payment of electricity bills, disconnections owing to non-payment, etc. This has been adopted by 24 States and Union Territories till now. Moreover, COAI undertook extensive efforts on Electricity Tariffs applicable to telecom sites, advocating for classification of telecom in the Industrial category for preferential tariff benefits and we are seeing some positive results coming up. For e.g., Uttar Pradesh has provisioned Industrial Tariff for units consuming minimum 150 kW of energy. COAI was also instrumental in getting the DISCOMs of Rajasthan to align their pole leasing charges, resulting in lesser financial outflow for the industry.



COAI Reports & Submissions

1. 100-day plan for the new Government

COAI prepared and submitted a comprehensive 100-day action plan tailored specifically for the new Government to address urgent challenges facing the telecommunications sector. This strategic roadmap identified key priorities requiring immediate attention to strengthen the industry. The recommendations included several targeted financial and regulatory reforms: reducing license fees to improve operator sustainability, recalibrating Universal Service Obligation (USO) fund contributions to better serve underserved areas, and implementing a centralized assessment model for spectrum usage charges to increase efficiency and transparency, among others.

2. Draft Digital Communications Policy for the next five years

COAI prepared a comprehensive policy document that incisively identified critical

challenges facing the telecommunications sector today. This analysis was paired with actionable, realistic solutions that balanced innovation with practical implementation constraints. A subsequent presentation to NTIPRIT effectively distilled these complex concepts into clear, compelling points that resonated with the audience. The presentation was well-received, indicating technical policy matters to key stakeholders.

3. Draft Critical Telecommunication Information (CTI) Rules

DoT issued these Draft Rules on August 28, 2024. COAI submitted its response to the same on October 04, 2024, highlighting the various issues including the overlapping with the present Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) requirements and need to remove these regulatory overlaps for Ease of Doing Business, duplication of efforts in submission of various compliance reports, etc. COAI made representation to the Rajya Sabha Committee on Subordinate

Legislation highlighting the concerns regarding the final rules issued by DoT.

4. Contribution by Large Traffic Generators to Digital Bharat Nidhi

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on December 27, 2024, highlighting the issue of contributions to the Digital Bharat Nidhi by Large Traffic Generators (LTGs). COAI submitted that these LTGs are directly benefitted by the network enhancements made by the TSPs, thereby fostering higher engagement levels, driving growth and profitability. Meanwhile, TSPs are burdened with triple responsibilities, which include expanding the coverage in unconnected areas, addressing growing traffic demands by increasing capacity and fulfilling their DBN contribution obligations. COAI suggested that to create parity and a sustainable, fair and effective model, DoT should set thresholds to determine large revenue generating LTGs for contribution to DBN, by way of levying of 10% of their Indian revenues and providing waiver of equivalent amount to licensed TSPs' contributions to DBN on a pro-rata basis.

5. Mandating Regulatory Framework for OTT/App Based Communication Services

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on January 07, 2025, on mandating Regulatory Framework for OTT/App Based Communication Service Providers. In the letter, COAI highlighted that various OTT/App Based Communication Service Providers are providing Voice, Video and Messaging services, thereby making these entities direct substitutes to the Licensed Telecom Entities. COAI further highlighted that despite being perfect substitutes to the Licensed Telecom Entities, these OTT/App Based Communication Service Providers do not comply with the plethora of compliances required - such as Security

Requirements, Licensing Conditions, TCCCPR and Regulatory levies which include License Fee, Digital Bharat Nidhi, etc. COAI suggested that there is an urgent need to bring these OTT/App Based Communication Service Providers under the same Regulatory regime, to bring them at par with Licensed Telecom Service Providers.

6. TRAI's Consultation Paper on Issues Related to Critical Services in M2M Sector and Transfer of Ownership of M2M SIMs

TRAI issued this consultation paper on June 24, 2024 and COAI submitted its response to the same on August 19, 2024. COAI stated that there is no need to revisit the Recommendations as TRAI had recommended the same in its Recommendation issued in 2017. In the present Consultation, COAI reiterated its position that Critical M2M services should be carried out only on the licensed spectrum band. Further, M2M devices should be brought under the Trusted Sources/Trusted Product Framework.

7. TRAI's Consultation Paper on Framework for Service Authorizations to be Granted Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023

TRAI issued this consultation paper on July 11, 2024 and COAI, in its response to the same on August 08, 2024, submitted that there is no major overhaul required as there has been a well-established telecom network infrastructure over the last 25 years and any change in Scope or in the Terms and Conditions of any Authorization, should be carried out through a separate Consultation process. COAI also submitted that the principle of no worse-off should be adopted while migrating from the old Licensing Regime to Service Authorization, and further that there should be no

expansion in the scope of ISPs/VNOs to provide leased circuit/VPN to third parties as under the present License condition, NLDs are already providing the same. Additionally, COAI submitted that OTT/App-Based Communication Service Providers should be brought under the Authorization Framework as an Access Service.

8. TRAI's Consultation Paper on Review of Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations (TCPR), 2012

TRAI issued this consultation paper on July 26, 2024 and COAI, in its response on August 19, 2024, submitted that there should be no separate Voice and SMS pack as affordable services have spurred wide-spread data usage throughout the nation, which has led to the highest data consumption in the country. Furthermore, COAI submitted that TSPs offer a diverse array of plans tailored to meet varying customer preferences and also have consistently demonstrated the adaptability to changing market dynamics, ensuring their offerings evolve in tandem with customer demands.

9. TRAI's Draft Telecommunication Tariff (Seventieth Amendment) Order, 2024

TRAI issued this consultation paper on August 23, 2024. In its response submitted on September 09, 2024, COAI submitted that the consultation process does not pass the test of transparency laid down under Section 11 (4) of the TRAI Act, requiring the Authority to ensure transparency while exercising its powers and discharging its functions. COAI had also submitted that FTTH and leased lines to PDOs serve different purposes in the telecommunications ecosystem. Using the two terms interchangeably and applying

regulatory tariff/price intervention in an interchanged scenario would create inefficiencies, potentially impacting the Quality of Service for both PDOs and end users, meanwhile also causing regulatory distortion.

10. TRAI's Consultation Paper on Review of the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018

TRAI issued this Consultation Paper on August 28, 2024 and COAI, in its response on October 09, 2024, submitted that the Indian Telecom Sector had taken several initiatives to minimise spam and protect consumer interest that has been instrumental in curbing the menace of Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC). COAI had also submitted that PEs should be regulated and TM-D should be brought under the licensing regime with sufficient financial eligibility requirements

11. TRAI's Consultation Paper on Terms and Conditions for the Assignment of Spectrum for Certain Satellite-Based Commercial Communication Services

This Consultation Paper was issued by TRAI on September 27, 2024, to which COAI responded on October 26, 2024, submitting that there is a strong need to maintain a level playing field, especially in offering commercial services in urban areas, regarding assignment of spectrum resources. COAI had submitted that nominal spectrum charges may be levied on satellite services catering to traditional markets such as rural and remote areas, defence and disaster recovery to complement the terrestrial networks in bridging the connectivity gaps.

12. Right of Way facilitation

The Telecom Infrastructure Committee of COAI worked diligently to take up industry concerns with various Central Ministries, State Governments, Regulatory bodies of Electricity, State Pollution Control units, LSAs, including participating in more than 50 State Broadband Committee (SBC) meetings and more than 200 formal submissions.

13. Industrial vs Commercial - Electricity Matters

COAI has filed 6 appeals challenging tariff orders issued by various state electricity regulatory commissions across the nation, in order to fulfill COAI's vision of establishing and sustaining a world-class telecom infrastructure and facilitating affordable mobile communication services in India. Various ERCs across the country have erroneously placed the telecom sector in the Commercial tariff category instead of the Industrial tariff category. The legitimate want of the industry is categorization in the industrial category as Telecommunications has a significant social, cultural and economic impact on modern society. These Appeals, therefore, pray for Industrial Tariff Category for the telecom sector, which will result in considerable financial relief for the sector and will have long lasting fruitful impact for the consumers at large.

14. TRAI's Draft Telecommunication Tariff (Seventy-First Amendment) Order, 2024

This consultation was issued by TRAI on January 15, 2025. COAI, in its response to the same on January 31, 2025, reiterated its position that FTTH and leased lines to PDOs serve different purposes in the telecommunication ecosystem. Using the two terms interchangeably and applying regulatory tariff/price intervention in an interchanged scenario would create

inefficiencies, potentially impacting the Quality of Service for both PDOs and end users, meanwhile also causing regulatory distortion. COAI also stated that B2B agreements work on mutual terms and conditions and therefore, should not be mandated as proposed in the Draft TTO. Furthermore, these agreements should be left to the dynamics of the market forces.

15. Denial of Input Tax Credit on equipment installed on telecom towers

Under the GST law, input tax credit has been denied on goods and services used for construction of an immovable property with an exception carved out for plant and machinery. However, telecommunication towers have been specifically excluded from the definition of plant and machinery. While this dispute is leading to stranding of taxes paid on vital components of the telecom network, some of the GST field formations are stretching it further to deny ITC on the network transmission and other ancillary equipment installed on these towers or places adjacent to these towers. Such telecom equipment and utilities are at the very heart and core of the network equipment used for providing telecom services. Denial of credit on such equipment by unduly stretching the ambit of exclusion clause can lead to a huge increase in cascading of input taxes already caused by the exclusion of goods and services, used for the construction and/or erection of telecom towers. The matter is being vigorously followed up with the Government.

16. Draft Rules for Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

On 3rd January 2025, MeitY issued a gazetted notification inviting stakeholder comments on the draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, rules that have been proposed under the

power conferred by sub-sections (1) and (2) of section 40 of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (22 of 2023). In response to the consultation process, COAI submitted its comments on 5th March 2025, in which several key concerns were raised and detailed feedback was provided on various provisions of the proposed framework. COAI particularly emphasized the need for reasonable implementation timelines, recommending that a minimum period of two years should be provided to ensure adequate industry preparedness and effective compliance. Further, COAI sought clarity on the scope and operational framework of the proposed Consent Manager, including the roles and responsibilities. It also raised concerns regarding the mechanism for obtaining verifiable parental consent, the process of calling for information from Data Fiduciaries or intermediaries and the potential duplication of compliance requirements under existing regulations. Additionally, COAI provided inputs on critical areas such as data erasure obligations, handling of data breach incidents, associated penalties, the need for a balanced Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) process and the establishment of an efficient and transparent user grievance redressal mechanism. Overall, COAI's submission focused on ensuring that the proposed framework is practical, clear and implementable, while also safeguarding the interests of all stakeholders within the digital ecosystem.

17. Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE) and Communication Security (ComSEC) Scheme

COAI, through its ongoing and regular engagement with government authorities, has consistently advocated for the resolution of industry challenges related

to the implementation of product testing under the MTCTE and ComSeC framework, to ensure seamless execution of testing processes while safeguarding the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) in the telecom sector. A key concern raised by COAI pertains to the communication security (ComSeC) requirements, specifically the mandate for submission of source code and internal test reports to designated testing labs (NCCS). COAI highlighted that such requirements are not aligned with global best practices and recommended that these obligations be reconsidered or exempted to maintain industry competitiveness and operational confidentiality. Following multiple rounds of discussions and deliberations with the concerned government officials, COAI's efforts have resulted in a positive development. The release of NCCS notification has granted an extension for the submission of source code and internal test reports until 31st December 2025. Additionally, the government has agreed to accept applications for the issuance of a "Pro-Tem Certificate" to facilitate interim compliance and ensure continuity of operations for the industry during this transitional period.

18. Input Tax Credit Accumulation issues in Telecom Sector

On 13th February 2025, COAI submitted a letter recommending the deletion of certain clauses of the GST Act introduced by Amendment in 2018, monetizing accumulated ITC through tradeable scrips for (a) claiming of ITC credit and (b) payment of BCD and any other indirect taxes and duties levied by the Central Government. Further, we submitted a letter on 17th March 2025, sharing the requisite information sought in the Stakeholders Advisory Committee held on 14th February 2025, pertaining to GST ITC accumulation in the industry and the estimated ratio of the GST blockage vis-a-vis the industry debt burden.

The matter is under the review of the Government.

19. Input Service Distribution (ISD) provisions

COAI made a detailed representation to MoF on issues in ISD provisions arising from the Amendments to Section 20 and Rule 39(1A) of the CGST Act and Rules (effective from April 1, 2025) and shared certain recommendations for consideration.

20. Invoice Management System (IMS) and its functionality

COAI has made a detailed submission to the Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN), highlighting concerns in the proposed facility developed by GSTN. A letter in this regard was also submitted on 10th February 2025, raising the issues and the proposed recommendations for resolution of the same.

21. Adoption of Uniform policy by customs field units

COAI submitted a letter on 5th March 2025, raising concerns regarding the Customs Department dispute in classification of various parts of imported telecom equipment. We requested CBIC to issue suitable instructions, directing all field formation officers to follow a uniform policy while clearing these telecom equipment parts.

22. TRAI's Consultation Paper on The Terms and Conditions of Network Authorisations to be Granted Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023

TRAI issued this Consultation Paper on October 22, 2024, and COAI, in its response submitted on November 19, 2024, stated that the authorization process

must continue to retain its existing contractual nature to ensure uniformity and enable smooth migration from the old Telegraph Act to the Telecom Act. COAI had also stated that there is no need for a separate authorization for cloud hosted telecommunication networks as the present framework is sufficient to accommodate these activities without any additional regulatory layers.

23. TRAI Recommendations on the Framework for Service Authorizations under the Telecommunications Act, 2023

In a letter submitted to DoT on October 14, 2024, COAI highlighted the concerns regarding the Recommendations issued by TRAI on the Framework for Service Authorizations under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, including retaining the Contractual Nature of the License Agreements in the upcoming Authorization of various services, expanding the scope of ISPs to provide DLC/VPN to third parties, non-inclusion of OTT/App Based Communication Service Providers under the Access Service Authorization, the issue of non-inclusion of Telemarketers in the Authorization Framework, Authorization Fee, among others.

24. SLP against Punjab & Haryana High Court Order

On 5th December 2024, a Full Bench of the Punjab & Haryana High Court upheld regulations passed by the State Government to charge fees for installation of mobile towers – higher than that prescribed in the Indian Telegraph (Right of Way) Rules, 2016. This decision threatens the very foundation of the powers of the Central Government under Entry 31, List I of the Constitution and as exercised under/through the Indian Telegraph Act, 1884, the 2016 RoW Rules, the Telecommunication Act, 2023 and the

recently notified Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024. COAI has appealed this judgment to the Hon'ble Supreme Court, asserting that telecommunications is a vital area of governance and that this decision should be overturned. COAI is also seeking the support of the DoT to ensure the protection of the provisions outlined in the new Telecommunication Act, as well as the recently enacted Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024.

25. Draft Telecommunications Radio Equipment Possession Authorization Rules, 2025

On 27th February 2025, DoT issued a gazetted notification inviting stakeholder comments on the draft Telecommunications Radio Equipment Possession Authorization Rules, 2025. These draft rules have been proposed under the powers conferred by clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 3, read with clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 56 of the Telecommunication Act, 2023 (Act 44 of 2023). In response to this consultation process, COAI submitted its inputs on 28th March 2025, wherein it raised key concerns and sought clarity on several newly introduced terminologies within the draft rules such as "Special Possession Authorization", etc., seeking exemption towards the destruction of the radio equipment from WPC. This clarity is essential to enable a better understanding of the regulatory intent and to ensure effective implementation. Additionally, COAI welcomed the proposal to extend the validity period of the radio equipment possession license to five years.

26. Draft Telecommunications (Standards, Conformity, Assessment and Certification) Rules, 2025

On 29th January 2025, DoT issued a gazetted notification inviting stakeholder

comments on the draft Telecommunications (Standards, Conformity, Assessment and Certification) rules that have been proposed under the power conferred under section 19 read with clause (zj) of sub-section (2) of section 56 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023. In response to the consultation, COAI submitted its comments on 28th February 2025, highlighting key concerns regarding the proposed framework, particularly emphasizing the need for reasonable implementation timelines, recommending that such timelines should not be less than one year to allow adequate preparation and compliance. Further, COAI strongly recommended that stakeholder consultation must be an integral part of the process prior to the release of any new standards, conformity assessment procedures or certification requirements. Additionally, COAI sought exemptions for conducting field trials or live testing in a controlled environment and provided inputs on other critical areas to ensure that the rules are practical, transparent and aligned with industry readiness.

27. Computation of interest in case of non-payment of vendor within 180 days as per second proviso to Section 16(2) of the GST Act, 2017

COAI submitted a letter on 1st July 2024, to CBIC, raising that there is ambiguity in the interpretation of the date from which interest on Input Tax Credit (ITC) reversal needs to be calculated in case the recipient fails to make payment to the vendor within 180 days from the date of invoice. The same is in view of the amendment to Section 16(2) read with Section 50 of the Central Goods and Service Tax Act, 2017 (for brevity "CGST Act") and Rule 37 of the CGST Rules, 2017 ('CGST Rules'). Pursuant to the amendment in Section 16 of the CGST Act read with amended Rule 37 of CGST Rules, the interest shall be computed as per the mechanism prescribed in Section 50 of the CGST Act,

i.e., starting from wrongful availment and utilisation of ITC, till date of reversal of the same. We, therefore, requested that a suitable clarification be issued that the interest under second proviso to Section 16(2) of the CGST Act 2017, would be payable for the period calculated from the expiry of 180 days – from the date of the invoice, subject to the utilization of the ITC and in case such ITC has not been reversed before the expiry of 180 days.

28. Pre-budget memorandum

COAI made a detailed presentation to MoF under the Chairmanship of Member CBDT on 14th November 2024. Other concerned senior officers from CBIC and TRU were also present in the meeting. During the meeting, discussions were held on the topics of Reduction in regulatory levies, Direct Tax issues and Indirect Tax issues, including Service Tax and Customs duty. The following points were agreed for examination:

- a. Carry forward of losses (Section 72) – Carrying forward of losses of Telecom operators, for offsetting, to 16 years from the present 8 years.
- b. Speedier disposals of appeals with CIT(A) and disposal of rectifications and order giving effects with stipulated timelines and speedier processing of refunds.
- c. Additional information in Form 26AS – to enable easier cross referencing of entries.
- d. No TDS under section 194Q on purchase of electricity.
- e. Bringing in a sunset clause to Customs Duty exemption for submarine cable survey, laying ships owing to permanence of the maritime borders and the continuing requirements.

29. AI Governance Guidelines Development Report released by MeitY for public consultation

On 6th January 2025, MeitY released the report on AI Governance Guidelines Development, constituted by the Advisory Group and chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor, to undertake the development of an ‘AI for India-Specific Regulatory Framework’ that aims to guide the development of a trustworthy and accountable AI ecosystem in India. In response to the consultation process, COAI submitted its comments on 5th March 2025, wherein it provided detailed inputs and recommendations across several key areas to support the development of a balanced and future-ready regulatory framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI).

COAI’s response focused on the following critical aspects:

- ⦿ Balanced AI Regulation and Self-Governance
- ⦿ AI Ethics, Bias Mitigation and Transparency
- ⦿ Flexible and Coordinated AI Governance Framework
- ⦿ AI Incident Reporting and Risk Assessment
- ⦿ AI in Critical Infrastructure
- ⦿ Addressing Deepfakes and AI-Generated Content
- ⦿ International Best Practices and Global AI Leadership

Overall, COAI’s submission aimed at fostering a collaborative and innovation-friendly regulatory environment, while ensuring responsible AI development and deployment aligned with international standards and ethical principles.

30. Illegal 6 GHz Wi-Fi CPEs being made available in the Indian market

COAI submitted a letter to WPC on 15th April 2024, to put a complete ban on sale of Wi-Fi products operating in the 6 GHz band, whether offline or online, through e-commerce websites/platforms listed in the letter, which have not yet been assigned for this purpose or has not been declared as license-exempt by the Government.

31. Support for acceptance of Evidence of Nodal Officer of Telecom Companies through Video Conference (VC) under Section 65 B of the Indian Evidence Act

COAI submitted a letter to the Uttar Pradesh High Court on 16th April 2024, requesting for support to consider appropriate measures to enable/allow Nodal Officers of TSPs to provide evidence in Court Cases through VC (Video Conference) and excuse the requirement of their personal appearances for the same. Similar requests were made to the High Court of Madhya Pradesh and the Chhattisgarh High Court on 5th June 2024 and 20th June 2024, respectively.

32. Request for Consultation with the Industry during the Formation of Draft Rules under the Indian Telecommunications Act of 2023

COAI letter was submitted to DoT on 14th June 2024, requesting the Department to hold an open consultation (like done during Telecom Bill stage) with our industry members and include their inputs during the various stages of the rule formation. Additionally, we proposed that the Department should form a Committee with industry members/our licensee TSPs to provide considered inputs on the Rules to be practically implemented.

33. Requesting further Extension in the timelines for Submission of EMF Self certificates and abeyance of 5G Site testing

COAI letter was submitted to DoT on 24th June 2024, requesting for a further extension in the timelines for the Submission of EMF Self-certificates and abeyance of 5G Site testing. In the letter, we requested time until the updated TSTP is issued and also requested that the EMR testing of 5G BTSs be kept in abeyance for a period of three months from the date of issuance of TSTP or until compliance extension as requested above, whichever is later.

34. Draft Guidelines for the Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communication, 2024

COAI letter was submitted to DoCA with reference to the Draft Guidelines for the Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communication, 2024, issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs. In the letter, COAI formally accepted that the proposed guidelines are very exhaustive and now, duly including all platforms and channels used to disseminate commercial communications is indeed a welcome step in protecting consumers' interests.

35. Revised Draft Standard titled "Standard for assessment of Electromagnetic Field Exposure from Telecom Base Stations"

TEC issued Revised Draft Standard titled "Standard for Assessment of Electromagnetic Field Exposure from Telecom Base Stations". In this regard, COAI provided its inputs and comments to the said draft standard, submitting the following: Immediate Revision of EMF Thresholds; Deferral of EMF TSTP

Implementation and Actual Maximum Approach needs to be used for evaluation of EMF exposure from Telecom Base Stations.

36. Review of Compliance Requirements by TSPs due to Upgrades/Additions by Other TSPs (OTS) as per TEC Test Procedure (TSTP) of August 2021

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 22nd July 2024, with reference to the concern raised by the industry regarding the penalty being levied on duplication of submission of the same certificate, with the same data, by all the other TSPs present on the shared site in case of upgrade carried out and submission of self-certificate by one TSP on that site. COAI requested that in case of OTS, the penalty for any non-compliance should only be levied on the originator TSP undertaking the upgrade/addition and not the other TSPs.

37. TEC Draft Standard for Mitigation of Interference in Radio Altimeters from 5G Base Stations operating in C-Bands

COAI submitted a letter to TEC on 14th August 2024, with reference to the invitation for inputs from stakeholders on the TEC Draft Standard on Mitigation of Interference in Radio Altimeters from 5G Base Stations operating in C-Bands, as kindly shared on 8th June 2024. In the letter, we requested TEC to keep in abeyance the requirement of this draft standard until DGCA, DOT and DST

take measures to mitigate the suspected interference to degraded Radio Altimeters due to operations of 3GPP compliant 5G radios.

38. Consultation Paper on “Revision of National Numbering Plan”

COAI submitted its counter comments to the TRAI Consultation Paper on “Revision of National Numbering Plan” released on 6th June 2024, wherein COAI stated that there is no need to migrate to an LDCA based scheme. Once transitioned to an LSA- based scheme, both the SDCA as well as LDCA based constraints would get addressed. Also, SDCA-based numbering scheme should be transitioned to a 10-digit closed License Service Area (LSA)-based numbering scheme prefixed with ‘0’.

39. Media Reports regarding expansion of trials of Direct to Mobile (D2M) Services in India

COAI submitted a letter to MIB on 13th September 2024, with reference to recent media reports about the decision taken in an inter-ministerial consultation regarding expansion of trials of Direct to Mobile (D2M) Services beyond the 19 cities into Tier-II and Tier-III cities. In the letter, COAI submitted that such services should only be deployed following spectrum assignment through auctions. Additionally, COAI also requested MIB to hold a broader industry and stakeholder consultation in framing the policy for D2M in the collective interest of the country.



10

Media Advocacy and Stakeholder Outreach

COAI continues to strengthen its position as the foremost and trusted voice of the Indian telecom industry, consistently engaging with Ministries, Policymakers, Regulators, Financial Institutions and Technical Bodies to champion the growth and sustainability of the sector. This year, COAI further solidified its stature by actively driving discussions on critical issues such as the regulation of LTGs, fair share contribution policies, governance of OTT Communication Services, spectrum allocation (especially the 6 GHz band), adoption of green energy and quality of service (QoS) improvements, among others. These efforts reflect COAI's unwavering commitment to supporting India's vision of a digitally empowered economy.

In a dynamic landscape marked by the convergence of industries and the world's fastest 5G rollout, COAI has remained steadfast in promoting ubiquitous, affordable and resilient mobile telephony. The association's timely and strategic interventions on emerging regulatory and policy matters — including message traceability for SMS, repeater and jammer regulations, illegal 6 GHz Wi-Fi CPE

sales, infrastructure challenges in major cities and new quality of service norms — have further reinforced its leadership and credibility among government stakeholders, industry partners and the media.

Through robust media advocacy, thought leadership initiatives and targeted outreach campaigns, COAI successfully amplified the industry's perspectives across influential platforms. Highlights include wide media coverage of COAI's recommendations around the DIGICOM Summit 2025, Union Budget 2024-25 and landmark judgments like the abolition of Wireless Operating Licenses and waiver of bank guarantees for telcos. COAI's insights on topics like Artificial Intelligence, Fixed Wireless Access, Cybersecurity, Private Networks and the Telecom Sector's role in achieving India's SDG goals were well-received through authored articles, podcasts and interviews across leading national and business media.

Guided by the Executive Council, COAI's advocacy has led to meaningful deliberations and strengthened the collaboration between

member organizations, policymakers and other stakeholders. This has fostered a mutual understanding of the industry's priorities and challenges, paving the way for an enabling policy and regulatory environment. By creating structured platforms for dialogue, COAI has been instrumental in aligning industry needs with policy objectives, helping to shape forward-looking frameworks on various aspects. These efforts have significantly contributed to the creation of an enabling policy and regulatory environment that supports innovation, investment and long-term sustainability of the sector — ultimately advancing India's digital transformation agenda.

This spirit of collaboration has not only enhanced policy formulation but also positioned COAI as a trusted bridge between the industry and the Government. By proactively identifying emerging issues and offering well-researched insights, COAI has ensured that the telecom sector's voice remains central to national digital and connected economic planning.

By bringing industry concerns to the forefront and offering actionable recommendations, COAI

has built a reputation as an expert, approachable organization for all matters telecom. It continues to drive discussions on cutting-edge technologies like 6G, AI, quantum communications and India Stack innovations, supporting India's ambition of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy.

In partnership with the Government of India, COAI remains deeply committed to building stronger telecom infrastructure, promoting investments in emerging technologies and ensuring inclusive digital access for all citizens. Through continued engagement in policy development, capacity-building initiatives and support for public-private collaborations, COAI plays a pivotal role in shaping a resilient and future-ready digital ecosystem. By championing initiatives that enhance rural connectivity, supporting innovation in areas such as AI and IoT, and promoting affordable mobile and broadband services, COAI is helping bridge the digital divide, empowering millions of citizens and driving socioeconomic inclusion. Together, these efforts are bridging the digital divide, fueling India's journey towards becoming a truly global digital powerhouse.



Significant media activities by COAI in FY 2024-25

Fair-share contribution from OTT services

The topic of fair-share contribution from OTT players/Large Traffic Generators has been a longstanding issue within the telecom ecosystem. COAI proactively intervened at various junctures through statements, multiple submissions to the ministry and interactions with key media, strengthening its point of view on the topic.

Media Coverage: Conversions in PTI, IANS along with other top print publications like The Times of India, Hindustan Times, Dainik Jagran, Economic Times, Business Standard, Mint and leading online publications like Moneycontrol, News18 and many others. Also, thought leadership articles were published in Financial Express, ET Telecom, etc.

Telcos for 'Fair Contribution' to Network Costs as AI Rises

Citing examples, firms seek revenue share from LTGs

Kiran, Natchee@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Indian telecom operators are warning that growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) will entail massive investments in network upgrades. They, however, argue that these investments will turn unsustainable if some large traffic generators (LTGs) continue to enjoy their infrastructural without giving a fair share, threatening the long-term viability of the telecom industry.

The industry reiterated its demand for revenue share from LTGs, citing examples from major economies like US, EU, South Korea and Brazil who are devising solutions to tackle the issue.

But technology bodies and app makers have in the past derided this demand from telcos, saying any such move would violate net neutrality and increase subscriber costs besides stifling innovation, contentions that operators reject. Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said growing convergence of diverse verticals and technologies is expected to lead to more bandwidth-heavy applications emerging, applying further pressure on networks, necessitating large investments.

COAI Accuses Tech Giants of Duplicity over Fair-share Fees

Sanjiv Kumar

COAI has accused tech giants of duplicity over fair-share fees, stating that while they claim to support infrastructure, they refuse to contribute to the costs of maintaining it. The association highlighted the growing disparity between the revenue generated by these companies and their contribution to the network infrastructure. It demanded a fair share of the revenue to be used for network upgrades and maintenance.

These global tech giants, fully equipped with the latest technology, are not contributing to the infrastructure that supports their services. This is a clear case of duplicity, where they claim to support the industry while refusing to share the costs of maintaining it.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

'OTTs use telecom networks but don't share revenue'

S. Ramesh Singh

OTTs use telecom networks but don't share revenue, COAI said. The association highlighted the growing disparity between the revenue generated by these companies and their contribution to the network infrastructure. It demanded a fair share of the revenue to be used for network upgrades and maintenance.

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businessline

With data traffic spiking, telcos want OTT players to share cost of infra

S. Ramesh Singh

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents telecom operators such as Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea, has written to the government on concerns over rising data traffic and associated infrastructure costs in the telecom industry.

This is in continuation of the letters that COAI had sent earlier, requesting the government to take steps to address the crucial issue of ensuring the large traffic generating (LTG) platforms contribute to the network costs.

LTGs put a disproportionate amount of data traffic on the networks, enjoy the benefits of telecom infrastructure built and maintained by operators giving rise to this debate, the industry body said.

"The deployment of 5G and the future 6G will necessitate increasing deployment on the edge with enhanced network capabilities. Besides the high cost for the same, the increased power consumption, optimisation, as well as infrastructure maintenance costs also need to be kept in mind," experts told businessline quoting the letter.

COAI, in a White Paper earlier, had also recommended that there is a potential loss of around ₹800 crore to the government, equivalent to the subsidy of ₹100 crore being given by LTGs, which is expected to increase further in the coming years if not addressed, it stated.

'IMPACT OF LTG'

"We would like to highlight that while certain LTGs and their associated have been suggesting that a fair share contribution would adversely impact the start-up ecosystem in the country, ironically, recent developments indicate to the contrary as the financially-strained approach of the LTGs nurtured when an Appstore provider (a global LTG) was made to pay for its network costs, forcing startups, quelling dreams of non-payment of their unpaid charges to these applications, for hosting them," the letter addressed to "Sanjay Mittal, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, said.

The same foreign LTGs "vehemently oppose" the fair-share proposal for that additional costs borne by the telecom service providers (TSPs) for carrying their disproportionately large traffic and provisioning the increasingly demanding infrastructure required to deliver to them. They prefer to enjoy a decade over the Indian TSPs' networks, while profiting heavily from them, the letter said.

"It may be noted that historically, the Indian TSPs have maintained from the beginning that smaller players, start-ups and MSMEs which generate low traffic would not be required to pay the fair-share charge. Only the top LTGs which generate massively volumes of traffic would have to contribute the same to share in the rising network costs," the letter added.

Regulation of LTGs/OTT Communication Services

In response to the media stories around LTGs/OTTs suggesting a distinction between TSPs operating solely at the network layer and OTT applications functioning exclusively at the application layer, COAI issued a statement expressing concern on the technical fallacy. COAI issued another statement on the issue of LTGs/OTT Communication Services around the security aspect

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in standalone stories from The Indian Express, The Financial Express, The Hindu and The Hindu Business Line, among others.

OTTs under Telecom Act? Despite govt's denial, telcos have a different view

SOUAMY ARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 21

LAST YEAR, when the government had released a draft version of the Telecommunications Act, there was one key definition that had concerned the industry. The word was telecommunication services, and tech companies felt the way it was described was broad enough to regulate over-the-top (OTT) communication services like WhatsApp and Google Meet, needing them to get an authorisation from the government.

This had sparked fears of government overreach. To calm nerves, the then telecom minister publicly assured that OTTs would not fall under the definition of telecom services. But, privately, tech companies remained sceptical—feeling that assurances made by the government through media statements did not have the same sanctity as the legal word.

Now, if seems they were right to be concerned. Eight months after the law was passed in Parliament, telecom operators Jio, Airtel, Vi and a lobby group which represents them, have all interpreted that the definition of telecommunication services is broad enough to regulate services. In comments to a telecom regulator TRAI, they said that they will open a part of the new Act, which asked OTT platforms to seek authorisation from the government, as part of what they are pitching as 'same service, same rules'.

The initial concern has morphed into confusion and all eyes are now on TRAI—whether or not it recommends that OTT platforms should be treated at par with telecom companies.

Telcos' assertion on inclusion of OTTs

In essence, the core argument of telecom companies is that they spend big money on purchasing spectrum, setting up the physical infrastructure for offering services and need to acquire a licence from the government. OTTs like WhatsApp also offer calling and messaging functions, but they don't have to purchase spectrum

'DEFINITION BROAD ENOUGH TO REGULATE OTT'



TELECOM OPERATORS Jio, Airtel, Vi and a lobby group which represents them, have all interpreted that the definition of telecommunication services is in fact broad enough to regulate over-the-top (OTT) services

or set up physical infrastructure like telcos have to. This, they claim, disadvantages them, especially when most communication has moved online.

In its submission to the TRAI's consultation paper on service authorisations, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents the three telecom companies Jio, Airtel and Vi, said: "As per our understanding, OTT communication services are covered under the new Telecom Act as an access service. We reiterate our view that the players providing OTT communication services should be brought under the licensing framework.

To address the issues of non-level playing field and ensure

sation to include OTT communication services, which as per our understanding, are covered under the new Telecom Act."

Where telcos and government diverge

In the Act, telecom services have been defined as: "transmission, transmission or reception of any messages, by wire, radio, optical or other electro-magnetic systems, whether or not such messages have been subjected to re-arrangement, computation or other processes by any means in the course of their transmission, emission or reception." And "messages" has been further defined as "any signal, writing, text, image, sound, video, data stream, intelligence or information sent or received by any means of telecommunication".

The Act was tabled in Parliament after various stakeholders raised concerns that such a definition was too broad and could potentially include all communication platforms.

However, former telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had, at the time, clarified publicly to the media that OTTs are not under the ambit of the law.

While telecom companies say that not imposing similar rules on OTT platforms was putting them at an economic disadvantage, the argument for not including OTT platforms in the telecom ambit stems from largely human rights issues—if a WhatsApp call was to be treated at par with a regular voice call, the company would have to enable monitoring of these calls because they could be subject to interception requests from the government.

Vi said that while there is no need for a new authorisation, "it would be prudent to increase the scope of access services authorisation to include OTT communication services."



Telcos urge Scindia: Equal rules for OTTs & relax service norms

JATIN GROVER
New Delhi, August 23

TELECOM OPERATORS — Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea — along with the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Friday urged communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to relax the recently notified quality of services norms and pressed for their demand for similar rules and regulations for OTT communication apps.

From the telecom operators side — Reliance Jio was represented by its managing director Pankaj Pawar, whereas Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra, BSNL CMD Robert Ravi, and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) director general SP Kochhar also attended the meeting.

This was Scindia's second meeting with the operators in the last month. Notably, DoT has formed six committees to improve the sector. These panels involve OEMs (original equipment makers), satellite communication companies, telecom service providers (TSPs), Internet service providers (ISPs), electronics, and academicians and

LIST OF DEMANDS



■ Telcos seek equal rules for OTT apps
■ Meeting with Jio, Vodafone, COAI, BSNL

■ Scindia's second meeting this month
■ DoT formed six improvement panels

■ Telcos want OTTs under Telecom Act

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

R&D experts in the telecom sector.

Officials said that telcos raised their concerns around the uneven level playing field between telcos and OTT players like WhatsApp,

Telegram, etc.

The COAI in its recent submission to Trai said: "As per our understanding, OTT communication services are covered under the new Telecom Act as an access service". This is against the stance of the former communications minister Ashwini Vaishnaw who clarified that the Telecom Act will not regulate the OTT apps.

According to telcos, OTTs are in competition with telcos looking at the nature of services and should be brought under the authorisation regime. The telecom companies have been demanding a revenue-sharing model with large traffic generators on telecom networks.

Among other key issues, COAI specifically raised the issue of stringent quality of services norms notified by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) recently and urged for some sort of relaxation, officials said.

In their earlier representation, COAI had said the new quality of services (QoS) rules notified by Trai will increase compliance and cost burden for telecom operators without any benefits to consumers.

Call, messaging apps must comply with rules for nation's security like telcos: COAI

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Telecom operators expect internet calling and messaging apps like WhatsApp, Google Meet and Telegram to comply with rules in the same manner as all service providers do, industry body COAI said on Monday.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) — whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, among others — said it is mulling a demand to include over-

the-top (OTT) communication apps from the Telecommunications Act 2023 as they are subject to other regulations because various non-telecom rules apply on telecom operators as well.

'IMBOLDING DEMAND' "The COAI would like to state that the security of the country is of utmost importance and in this regard, all communication service providers, including OTT-based communication services, should adhere to the regulatory framework of the country as done by the telecom service providers," COAI Director General, SP Kochhar said. He said that telecom operators have invested heavily in setting up the in-



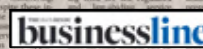
UNSAFE ENVIRONMENT. According to COAI, the rapid growth of OTT services and unregulated proliferation of communication services is creating a "very high risk of security threats."

Infrastructure for lawful interception and monitoring. "However, despite government's best intentions, the application-based services are completely opaque and unregulated, which is a big security threat to the nation," Kochhar said.

SECURITY THREAT He said that the exponential growth of OTT services and unregulated proliferation of communication services is creating a "very high risk of security threats, while also cre-

ating an uneven, level playing field for the regulated services. The COAI is also regulated by all the above legislations as prescribed by Parliament," Kochhar said.

"Telecom operators have been demanding that the government should provide a level playing field by applying the same rules on calling and messaging apps as it is applicable to them."



regulatory oversight of communication services covered under the Act, 2023. "It is important to highlight that the COAI is also regulated by all the above legislations as prescribed by Parliament," Kochhar said.

5G Spectrum Auction

5G Spectrum Auctions were held from 25th - 26th June 2024 and COAI issued a statement in the media regarding the same.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in multiple stories by news wires PTI, PTI Bhasha and IANS; leading print publications like, New Indian Express, Financial Express, The Telegraph, Deccan Herald; and online publications like Times of India, The Hindu, Business Standard, The Hindu Business Line, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, Dainik Jagran, NDTV, NDTV Profit, ET Government, CNBC TV18, and others.

5G spectrum auction: Telcos place bids worth around Rs 11,000 crore on day 1

Telecom companies have shown interest in 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2500 MHz and 26 GHz bands on the first day

DANISH KHAN | 24th June 2024 | 12:32 PM



moneycontrol

Telecom auction 2024

Indian private telecom operators placed bids worth over Rs 11,000 crore on the first day of the 5G spectrum auction, which saw five rounds of bidding. The bidding will resume on June 26.

5G spectrum auction outcome to boost connectivity: COAI

Delhi-based COAI, which represents incumbent telecom carriers, also said that it "eagerly anticipates the successful completion of 5G spectrum auctions."

ET Telecom


ET Telecom
Updated On Jun 25, 2024 at 02:39 PM IST



NEW DELHI: The outcome of ongoing spectrum sale will lead to increased coverage and enhanced connectivity, and lay a foundation for the digitally-empowered country, a telco group Tuesday said.

5G spectrum auction: Reliance Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea bid

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS



ing the digital divide, the 5G spectrum auctions will ensure that even the most remote areas of our country gain access to high-speed internet," he added.

This is the 10th spectrum auction since the process began in 2010. However, this is only the second one for the 5G spectrum. The previous one was conducted in 2022 when the government raised the bid ceiling to Rs 10,000 crore.

The central government on Tuesday conducted an auction for fifth generation (5G) mobile service radio waves, valued at Rs 96,238 crore, which is likely to boost high-speed internet services even in remote areas.

Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea were among those who placed bids. According to the bids, at least four rounds of bidding were conducted.

The total quantum of spectrum being auctioned is 10,522.35 MHz across 10 bands, the union telecom ministry said in a statement.

"The 5G auctions will catalyse the rapid rollout of 5G services across the country, leading to enhanced coverage and vastly improved connectivity," said S P Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

"The successful deployment of 5G will be a major stride towards achieving digital inclusion. By brid-

Telcos place bids of ₹11,000 cr for spectrum on Day 1

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi



ON the first day of the spectrum auction, which saw five rounds of bidding, telecom service providers placed bids worth about ₹11,000 crore. The government has put over 10,500 MHz spectrum, including airwaves for 5G services, valued at ₹96,238 crore on the block.

According to the Day 1 spectrum auction report issued by the Department of Telecom, biddings took place mainly in the 900 and 1800 MHz bands. The Department sold 94.4 MHz spectrum on the first day out of 10,523 MHz spectrum available. The auction will resume on Wednesday.

An analysis done by expert Parag Kar Singh on first day, telcos placed bids for 1800 MHz band for ₹6,306.2 crore and 5 MHz in the 2100 MHz band for ₹360 crore.

Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea are participating in the auction. Jio has deposited the highest earnest money of ₹3,000 crore for the auction, which provides the company with the firepower to bid for maximum radiowaves among the three telcos. Airtel has submitted an earnest money deposit (EMD) of ₹1,950 crore and VIL of ₹300 crore.

COAI, the lobbying body for private telecom companies, said the auction will help catalyse the rapid rollout of 5G services across the country, leading to enhanced coverage and vastly improved connectivity. Moreover, successful deployment of 5G will be a major stride towards achieving digital inclusion," SP Kochhar, director-general of COAI, said in a statement. It is the 10th spectrum auction since the process for sale of radiowaves started through an online bidding process in 2010.

The last spectrum auction was held in August 2022, which, for the first time, included radio waves for 5G services. The previous spectrum auction generated more than ₹1.5 lakh crore (₹18 bn) for the government from the nation's three top mobile operators and newcomer Adani Group.

6 GHz spectrum band for IMT/5G

COAI reiterated that the mid-band 6 GHz band is critical for rapid and cost-efficient deployments of 5G, 5G Advanced and the future 6G mobile networks in India, with the exponentially increasing data demands which is expected to grow further.

Media Coverage: In continuation to our advocacy for 6 GHz spectrum band for IMT services, DG-COAI interacted with ET Telecom at the ET Telecom 5G/6G Congress.

6 GHz mid-band spectrum to enable effective expansion of 5G networks in India: COAI

Kochhar said there is a mismatch between the quantum of spectrum available to telcos and the geographical territory that they have to cover with their 5G networks.

 **ET Telecom**

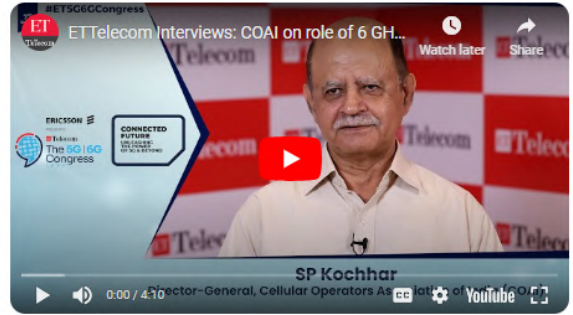
Ashutosh Kumar · ETTelecom
Updated On Mar 28, 2024 at 10:47 AM IST

Read by: 3744 Industry Professionals




SP Kochhar
Director-General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)

NEW DELHI: The spectrum shortage for effectively expanding fifth-generation or 5G mobile networks in India will be fulfilled by the crucial 6 GHz frequency band, according to an industry association.



ETTelecom Interviews: COAI on importance of 6 GHz band for optimal 5G expansion in India

SP Kochhar, Director-General of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), in an interview with ETTelecom at the publication's seventh edition of 5G/6G Congress...[Read More](#)

 **ET Telecom**

Ashutosh Kumar · ETTelecom
Updated On Mar 28, 2024 at 10:40 AM IST



COAI recommendations for Union Budget 2024-25

The interim Union Budget and the final Union Budget were tabled in parliament by the Finance Minister in July 2024 and February 2025, respectively. COAI opined on these provisions for the telecom industry through press releases and statements and authored articles on both occasions.

Media Coverage: Standalone stories in leading publications such as IANS and ANI; leading print publications like The Hindu Business Line, Financial Express, Business Standard, Moneycontrol, Zee Business, Republic Business, Republic World, ThePrint, Communications Today, Voice&Data and others.

Telcos call for tax reforms in Budget

WIRED IN. Operators' body says recommendations will bring in digital empowerment, inclusivity for the sector

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Telecom operators, including Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone-Idea, on Wednesday called for urgent tax reforms in the upcoming Budget to revitalise the sector.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said its recommendations to the Finance Ministry will help improve the sector's financial well-being, which is crucial for fulfilling the government's mission of digital empowerment and inclusivity.

Key recommendations include a request for abolishing regulatory levies — universal service obligation fund (USOF) and annual gross revenue (AGR); exemption of service tax on additional AGR dues; extension of carry forward of business losses from eight years to 16 years and exemption of GST.

Considering the huge capital investment, especially for 5G deployment, the COAI recommended that the USOF levy be abolished.

Alternatively, the government may consider suspending the USOF contribution of 5% of AGR till the USOF corpus of around ₹80,000 crore is exhausted.

NETWORKING. Given the huge capital investment, especially for 5G deployment, the COAI urged that the universal service obligation fund levy be abolished.

businessline

by body said the present situation covers revenue from all telecom activities and, therefore, the definition of GIL should be precise, stipulating that revenue from activities for which no licence is required should not be part of GIL.

On extension of carry forward of business losses, the COAI said the existing provisions provided eight years limitation to business losses, which may result in lapse of losses for companies that have longer recovery journey. The telecom operators' body urged the government to address the above concerns by introducing a special regime under Section 72 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, wherein business losses can be carried forward and set-off till 16 assessment years from the existing eight.

CHECKING MISUSE
To prevent misuse of the extended time limit, a restriction can be put on dividend distribution, wherein any dividend distribution within five years from the date of utilisation or set-off of unutilised losses by the company can attract additional dividend distribution tax of 25 per cent. (in addition to TDS), up to the amount of losses set-off by the company, on which no deduction or credit will be available to the company or shareholder, it said.

"Over the past decade, the government has undertaken reformative steps to fuel India's digital ambitions and achieve accelerated growth. We hope the government will consider these recommendations," S P Kochhar, Director General, COAI, said.

ET NOW @ETNOWlive

#ETNOWExclusive | "We want financial burden to be reduced (on Telecom Sector)", says COAI DG

SP Kochhar, DG of Cellular Operators Association of India, emphasizes reducing financial stress on the telecom industry

Speaking to ET NOW's Sumita Kareer, he outlines key recommendations for the upcoming Budget

Listen in

@ConnectCOAI @SumitaKareer

ET NOW

MARKET RADAR WHAT ARE THE TELECOM SECTOR'S KEY RECOMMENDATIONS?

SP KOCHHAR

32% Of Our Earnings Into Taxes Should Be Reduced

6:38 PM - Jan 17, 2025 7,202 views

Telcos seek abolition of USOF levy

RUN-UP TO THE BUDGET 2024-25

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, July 10

THE CELLULAR OPERATORS Association of India (COAI), which represents telecom companies like Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, on Wednesday reiterated its demand that the universal service obligation fund (USOF) levy should be abolished. It also requested the finance ministry to lower the licence fee besides seeking exemptions on customs duty on import of telecom equipment and GST, among others.

Currently, telecom operators pay 8% of their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to the government as licence fee.

THE WISH LIST

- Telcos pay 8% of their adjusted gross revenue to the govt as licence fee
- Of this, 5% goes to USOF and 3% to the general exchequer

5% of AGR should be abolished till existing USOF corpus of around ₹80,000 crore is exhausted, urges the COAI

■ Licence fee should be brought down to 1% from 3% at the earliest

20% on import of telecom equipment should be reduced to zero

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

high-quality equipment is available domestically at competitive prices, COAI urges the government to reduce customs duties for 4G and 5G network products, as well as other related items, to nil, it said.

COAI has also requested for a special regime under Section 72 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, wherein the business losses can be carried forward and set-off till 16 assessment years, from the existing 8 years.

Telcos want service tax exemption on additional AGR dues in Budget

OTHER DEMANDS. Seek customs duty waiver, extension of carrying forward biz losses

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Telecom operators on Monday sent a slew of requests to the Finance Ministry seeking exemption of service tax on additional adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues, exemption of customs duty and extension of carrying forward business losses from eight to 16 years in the upcoming Union Budget.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea, said it has also requested for a special regime under Section 72 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, wherein the business losses can be carried forward and set-off till 16 assessment years, from the existing 8 years.

LEVY REDUCES
"Lowering levy burden and promoting investment opportunities for the TSPs are not just economic imperatives, but also strategic investments in the country's future. With 5G and the forthcoming AI, digital ecosystem and bringing customisation across industries, we encourage the government to promote telecom infrastructure development by doing so, the administration may establish a precedence for providing government, propelling India toward a strong digital future," S P Kochhar, Director General, COAI, said.

The industry is optimistic that the Finance Ministry will consider the recommendations put forth by COAI, as they are crucial to improve the overall ease of doing business and restore the financial health of this prime sector, he added.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

CUSTOMS DUTY
"Until high-quality equipment is available domestically at competitive prices, we urge the government to reduce customs duties for 4G and 5G network products, as well as other related items, to nil," it said.

LOWERING LITV
Prior to the introduction of GST, service tax was paid on AGR payments, with credit

TELCOs' EXPECTATIONS FROM BUDGET 2025

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Banks Said To Ask RBI To Delay April Liquidity Rule

USD-INR
86.5775 ▲ 0.0100

Jan 21, 07:30-2pm

Quality of Service (QoS) regulations by TRAI

TRAI issued new quality of service (QoS) regulations mandating telecom service providers to ensure better network performance and transparency. COAI emphasized the Telecom Service Providers' commitment to enhancing Quality of Service (QoS) despite regulatory challenges, including RoW issues and external factors impacting network performance. While the industry is concerned about stricter QoS regulations, it remains dedicated to delivering superior service while engaging constructively with TRAI.

COAI issued a press note on its viewpoint.

Media Coverage: Basis the press note, coverage appeared in IANS, PTI and PTI Bhasha; leading print publications like, Economic Times, Hindu Business Line, Financial Express, Mint, Dainik Jagran, etc.; and online publications like, Times of India, Hindustan Times, Business Standard, ET Telecom, ET CFO, The Statesman, Zee News, Zee Business, Communications Today, and others.

Trai's new service quality rules to raise cost burden, say telcos

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, August 4

THE CELLULAR OPERATORS Association of India (COAI) on Sunday said the new quality of services (QoS) rules notified by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) will increase compliance and cost burdens for telecom operators without benefiting consumers.

COAI, which represents major telecom operators, expressed disappointment with TRAI's new norms, citing challenges related to right of way (RoW) norms and equipment theft.

"The industry expresses concern over the proposed regulations, which not only tighten benchmarks but also shift from quarterly to monthly reporting and site to cell level reporting in many cases," said SP Kochhar, director general of COAI, in a statement.

"In fact, the QoS rules have not been introduced by any other regulator in similar economies," Kochhar added.

According to Kochhar, telecom operators still grapple with RoW issues when acquiring permissions for infrastructure deployment on

WEAK SIGNAL

COAI cited challenges related to right of way (RoW) norms and equipment theft

Telcos report interference from various sources degrades signal quality and network performance

The use of illegal boosters by unauthorised agents, as well as equipment theft negatively impact QoS

Trai on Friday introduced new QoS norms for better network performance and transparency, effective from October 1

degrades signal quality and network performance. The use of illegal boosters and repeaters by unauthorised agents, as well as equipment theft, also negatively impact QoS, the association said.

Additionally, the frequent removal of overhead fiber by authorities significantly impacts QoS. Telecom operators have limited control over these external factors that adversely affect service quality, they said.

Trai on Friday introduced new QoS norms for better network performance and transparency, effective from October 1. Penalties for non-compliance with each QoS benchmark start at ₹1 lakh. For a second offense, the fine will increase to a maximum of ₹2 lakh, and for subsequent offenses, it will be ₹3 lakh per benchmark.

The regulator has also introduced penalty system with ₹1 lakh, ₹2 lakh, ₹5 lakh, and ₹10 lakh, depending on the scale of the violation.

As part of the new norms, Trai has mandated service providers to display technology-specific (2G/3G/4G/5G) mobile coverage maps on their websites to enable consumers to make informed decisions.

optic cables. The situation is further aggravated by the additional requirement of street furniture for 5G networks, he said.

Telecom companies report that interference from various sources, such as other wireless devices and electromagnetic interference,

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Telco gripe

NEW DELHI: Telecom regulator Trai's new quality of service norms with stricter provisions have triggered a backlash among telecom operators face on ground in terms of roll-out, illegal transmitters etc, industry body COAI said on Sunday. PTI

दूरसंचार कंपनियों को पसंद नहीं आए सेवा में सुधार के नए नियम

जगल बूरी, नई दिल्ली: देश में दूरसंचार का बहुत नेटवर्क है लेकिन इसकी गुणवत्ता अभी भी संतुष्टि से कोरी दूर है। अब टेलीकॉम रेग्युलेटर ट्राई ने गुणवत्ता सुधारने को लेकर नए दिश-निर्देश जारी किए हैं।

से न्यू भरपूर गलत। प्रविधान शामिल किए गए हैं। यह दिश-निर्देश कंपनियों को रास नहीं आ रहे हैं।

मोबाइल सेवा देने वाली कंपनियों के संगठन सीओआई ने रविवार को इस बारे में अपने नाराजगी जताने शुरू किया कि नए नियमों से उनकी लागत बढ़ेगी। यानी इसका असर काल व घटा दौरे पर भी हो सकता है। सीओआई के महाप्रबन्धक ने, जनरल एग्जिक्यूटिव का कहना है कि ट्राई लगातार सेवा गुणवत्ता सुधारने के लिए नए दिश-निर्देश

● दूरसंचार कंपनियों के संगठन सीओआई ने जवाब नाराजगी
● कड़ा, समस्याओं के समाधान पर कोई कदम नहीं उठाता ट्राई

कंपनियों को दूर संचार के लिए कई तरह के नियमों का तब भी नहीं मानते हैं। दूर संचार के लिए नए दिश-निर्देश चिंतनकर्ता हैं। नए नियमों के मुताबिक, कंपनियों को हर महीने सेवा गुणवत्ता रिपोर्ट देनी होगी।

The Telegraph

New Service Quality Rules Tough, will Hike Cost Burden: Telcos

Say move won't bring great benefits to users either; plan to raise the issue with telecom min

Kiran Rathee

New Delhi: Telcos have termed the new service quality rules set by the regulator as tough, which would increase their cost and compliance burden and plan to raise the issue with telecom minister Jyoti Radhika Sinha's soon, executives aware of the details told ET.

The industry, in a separate statement, said no regulator in similar economies have introduced such norms. The telcos stressed that while the rules will entail a cost burden on them, benefits to consumers won't be great.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) announced new parameters to measure quality of service (QoS) for telecommunications on Friday and the rules will come into effect from October 1.

The regulator not only made the rules more stringent but also incorporated provisions that will mandate telcos to compensate consumers in case the network outage is not resolved in a particular time frame. Financial penalties have also been increased, while the reporting around performance has to be done on a monthly basis and at a cell level. Currently, telcos report on a quarterly basis and till a base station level.

"The firms will take up the QoS matter with the minister in their second round of meeting. There are certain control of

will be a holistic," an executive said.

Another executive said the industry will also engage with Trai in highlighting the pain points. During the meetings with Trai officials, which followed a consultation process on the matter, the industry had pointed out the difficulties in meeting the new parameters, which weren't accepted by the sectoral watchdog.

Pain Points

Trai's new QoS rules effective from October 1

COAI says no similar regulations in comparable economies

New rules will mandate telcos to compensate customers for extended network outages

Fixed-Line users to get compensation for delayed repairs

INDIAN C

"While we are disappointed with the stringency of these new regulations, we remain committed to engaging constructively with Trai on QoS-related matters," the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in its statement. The body represents all the three private telecom operators - Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The association said the QoS parameters prescribed in the new regulations have not been introduced by any other regulator in other similar economies. "These changes are expected to significantly increase the compliance as well as the cost burden on telecom operators, and without commensurate benefits for the customer," it said.

For fixed-line services, users will have to be compensated if the fault in their network or service is repaired after three days.

For mobile services, users will have to be compensated if the fault in their network or service is repaired after three days.

For fixed-line services, users will have to be compensated if the fault in their network or service is repaired after three days.

Illegal 6 GHz Wi-Fi CPEs available in the Indian market

On the issue of illegal sale of Wi-Fi 6E wireless routers which operate on the 6 GHz frequency band, on e-Commerce websites/online platforms, COAI made an industry submission to DoT.

Media Coverage: The submission was covered in standalone stories by news wires like PTI, IANS; leading print publications like, The Economic Times, Business Standard, The Hindu BusinessLine, Dainik Jagran, etc., and online publications like Times of India, Moneycontrol, Times Now, ET Telecom, ET Now, Storyboard18, and many others.

Telcos Urge DoT to Ban WiFi 6E Routers' Sale on Ecomm Sites

TP-Link, Google among vendors selling routers 'illegally': COAI

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Indian telecom operators have urged the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to take "strict measures" to stop the illegal sale of Wi-Fi 6E routers on e-commerce platforms. These routers operate on the 6GHz band, whose use has not been assigned for providing Wi-Fi, nor has it been designated as licence-exempt, telcos argue.

"We would like to submit that DoT is yet to take a policy decision related to the 6GHz band utilisation. Therefore, any sale of such Wi-Fi 6E products, which utilises the 6GHz spectrum band in delineated manner, is illegal and such sale would only result in unauthorised transmissions in our country," SP Kochhar, director-general, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), said in a letter to Neelam Kulkarni, secretary, DoT. ET copy of the letter dated 15, 2024.

TP-Link, Deco, Netgear and Google are among the vendors selling their Wi-Fi 6E routers in India via platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart and Moglix, according to data presented by the industry association.

COAI seeks ban on sale of Wi-Fi 6E routers in India

New Delhi: Telecom industry body COAI has sought a ban on the sale of Wi-Fi 6E routers which utilise 6 GHz spectrum band for data transmission as the government is yet to decide on the use of these frequencies. COAI has alleged that such

businessline firms like Amazon, Flipkart and Moglix and by offline traders.

Telcos step up to stop illegal sale of 6 GHz WiFi routers

In a move that may widen the gulf between telecom operators and the illegal WiFi routers that run on the lucrative 6 GHz spectrum band, being sold on e-commerce sites, telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India has written to the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) to seek an immediate ban on the sale of all routers operating on the band. The 6 GHz band represents the largest block of unused spectrum and is being fought over by telcos and tech firms. This is due to significant potential for 5G connectivity and WiFi expansion.

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY

Business Standard

COAI urges govt to intervene against illegal sale of Wi-Fi 6E wireless routers

RAKESH KUMAR | New Delhi

THE Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), an association of the three major private telecom service providers in the country, urged the government to intervene against the illegal sale of Wi-Fi 6E wireless routers on e-commerce websites and platforms to control unauthorised transmissions in the country, telcos argue.

"We would like to submit that DoT is yet to take a policy decision related to the 6GHz band utilisation. Therefore, any sale of such Wi-Fi 6E products, which utilises the 6GHz spectrum band in delineated manner, is illegal and such sale would only result in unauthorised transmissions in our country," said SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI.

TP-Link, Deco, Netgear, and Google, among others, are the vendors selling Wi-Fi 6E routers in India via platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, Moglix, and others, as per the data presented by the industry association.

COAI has sought a ban on the sale of Wi-Fi 6E routers which utilise 6 GHz spectrum band for data transmission as the government is yet to decide on the use of these frequencies.

INDIAN EXPRESS

वाई-फाई 6ई राउटर की ऑनलाइन बिक्री बंद हो

नई दिल्ली: सेल्युलर ऑपरेटर्स के संगठन सीओआइ ने एमेज़ोन, फ्लिपकार्ट जैसे ई-कॉमर्स प्लेटफॉर्म पर वाई-फाई 6ई राउटर की बिक्री पर रोक लगाने की मांग की है। दूरसंचार विभाग को रोके राउट में सीओआइ ने भी तब सरकार ने दैनिक जागरण उपयोग के लिए जारी नहीं किया है। ऐसे में इनकी बिक्री पूरी तरह से अवैध है।

SC granting telecom companies right to claim tax credits on infra duties

COAI welcomed the Supreme Court's judgement granting telecom companies right to claim tax credits on telecom towers and related infrastructure, including green shelters. The verdict offers financial relief and reinforces consistency in taxation for the industry.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered by PTI, IANS, Hindustan Times, New Indian Express, Business Standard, Financial Express, Mint, The Telegraph, Economic Times, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, etc.

Relief for telcos as SC grants tax credit on tower parts

By BUREAU
New Delhi, November 20

IN A RELIEF for telecom operators—Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, Tata Teleservices, and Indus Towers—the Supreme Court on Wednesday held that the companies can claim central value-added tax (Cenvat) credit on central excise duties paid by them on towers and their parts, green shelters, printers, office chairs, and other related materials.

The SC revoked an earlier judgment by the Bombay High Court, which in 2014 ruled that the towers were not capital goods under the Cenvat Credit Rules 2004, and therefore denied telecom companies to claim any credit.

As per the Cenvat credit scheme, manufacturers and service providers can offset taxes paid on inputs, capital goods, and input services against the taxes payable on their final product or service. The same avoids any chances of cascading effect of taxes at various stages of production or service, which in a way does not lead to increase in price of final products or services.

The **FINANCIAL EXPRESS** reported that in 2016, the excise department issued a show-cause notice to Bharti Airtel and said the company had wrongly claimed Cenvat credit. The department also imposed a

SC allows telcos to claim tax credit on infra duties

Overturns 2014 Bombay HC ruling classifying infrastructure items as non-capital goods

NEW DELHI: In a significant victory for telecom companies, the Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday ruled in favour of Bharti Airtel Ltd and other operators, allowing them to claim central value-added tax (Cenvat) credits on duties paid for key infrastructure items such as tower components, shelters and other related materials.

This decision overturned a 2014 ruling by the Bombay High Court (HC), which had classified these items as non-capital goods, and thereby denied telecom companies the ability to claim the credit.

The ruling by the bench of justices B.V. Nagarathna and N. Kotturwar Singh on Wednesday aligns with the views taken by various high courts, including a 2018 judgment by the Delhi HC favouring the telcos' claim over credit, but differed from the stance of the Bombay HC. This ruling is seen as a major win for Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, Tata Teleservices and Indus Towers granting them right to claim tax credits.

The **Business Standard** reported that the decision is a significant win for the industry, as it allows them to claim credit on duties paid for infrastructure items, which were previously classified as non-capital goods. The ruling is expected to provide a significant financial relief to the industry, as it allows them to offset the taxes paid on inputs against the taxes payable on their final product or service.

SC's tax credit ruling gives relief to Airtel, Vi, other telcos

Krishna Yadav & Gulveer Aulakh
krishna.yadav@dwire.in

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The **Mint** reported that the decision is a significant win for the industry, as it allows them to claim credit on duties paid for infrastructure items, which were previously classified as non-capital goods. The ruling is expected to provide a significant financial relief to the industry, as it allows them to offset the taxes paid on inputs against the taxes payable on their final product or service.



TSPs issue in Bengaluru

Concerns were raised by COAI over persistent infrastructure challenges in Bengaluru, particularly delays in fiber laying and RoW (Right of Way) permissions, which are hampering telecom service quality.

Media Coverage: DG, COAI contributed an opinion article in The Economic Times during the Bengaluru Tech Summit, where he highlighted how these issues threaten the city's position as a Global Capability Centre (GCC) hub, urging urgent intervention to ensure seamless digital connectivity.

DG, COAI also gave interviews on PTI TV and ANI TV.



Make B'luru Great Again (GCC Remix)

S P Kochhar

In a step expected to streamline the deployment of telecom infra, facilitate faster rollout of 5G networks and be a game-changer for the industry, DoT has asked states to 'mandatorily' follow right-of-way (RoW) rules notified recently under the Telecommunication Act, from January 1.

To understand why this directive is a crucial development, one must look at Bengaluru. With 600-plus GCCs with a market size of \$22.2 bn, India's tech capital accounts for more than 30% of the country's GCCs and 35% of GCC workforce. It has bigger dreams.

Earlier this week, the Karnataka government launched its dedicated GCC policy at the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2024. The state wants to establish 500 new GCCs by 2029, creating 2.5 lakh additional jobs and more than doubling the sector's economic output to \$50 bn. The policy also focuses on going beyond the capital city and promoting development in the state's tier-2 cities.

Yet, one of the critical issues affecting the city's growth and its communications infra is the lack of proper implementation of RoW rules for telecom service providers (TSPs). The RoW framework governs access and usage of public land and thoroughfares for laying telecom cables and other network equipment.

In Bengaluru, the absence of a streamlined, transparent RoW policy has created roadblocks for telcos seeking to upgrade and expand their network coverage. This, in turn, has hampered the ability of GCCs to access reliable, high-speed connectivity — a fundamental requirement for the data-intensive work they undertake.

Disruption stemming from the removal of optical fibre cables (OFCs) by Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescem) initiated a debate over how the city's telecom infra should be constructed and maintained. Since April, Bescem has removed 7,175.48 km of OFCs and data cables out of the total 9,250.25 km. While efforts to remove unauthorised cables must be appreciated, they create operational challenges for businesses and consumers.

When these critical OFC lines are removed, businesses find their operations crippled without reliable phone and internet access, while public services like hospitals, schools and emergency response systems become hamstrung in their ability to function effectively.

Bengaluru requires robust network infra to cater to its growing demand for data, particularly with the onset of 5G, which requires additional OFC capacity to fibreise mobile towers. TSPs have been apologetic for norms alone for underground trenching or horizontal drilling (HDD). The permission to dig either by using their poles or leasing poles from utilities, that government approvals have either been delayed or stopped.

The telecom industry requires permission from respective government agencies to lay structured aerial fibre across Bengaluru, enabling TSPs to connect towers for 4G/5G/fiber wireless access (FWA), and facilitate the rollout of these services.

TSPs are aligned and eager to transition existing aerial OFCs to underground ones in a phased manner, wherever possible, to mitigate the challenges of maintaining aerial networks that are vulnerable to damage and theft. A viable solution is to provide pre-built common ducts or cable corridors that TSPs can use for a reasonable fee. This would reduce both time and infrastructure disruptions.

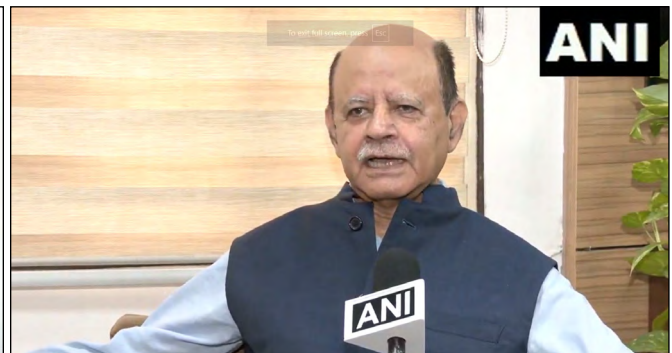
Also, the industry faces logistical issues because parallel urban development projects, such as metro construction and road expansions, often impact underground installations. To protect OFCs, TSPs are required to move to aerial installations temporarily, a process that requires timely approvals. With these multiple challenges and the objective to deliver seamless connectivity, telecom networks are under infra bottlenecks.

Bengaluru's premier tech hub, a GCC destination, but also provide far-reaching benefits for the city's vital public services and businesses that rely on robust, high-speed connectivity.

With the right policy interventions and collaborative efforts between public and private sectors, Bengaluru can strengthen its digital backbone and cement its position as a global innovation centre that continues to drive India's technology-led growth.

The writer is DG, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)

First, get your direction sorted



India Mobile Congress 2024

On the sidelines of India Mobile Congress 2024, DG – COAI issued quotes at various panel discussions through IMC day press releases, industry stories, etc. COAI also reiterated its key takeaways from IMC 2024 through a press note.

COAI further contributed various opinion articles based on the themes of IMC 2024.

Media Coverage: Standalone stories appeared basis DG COAI interactions with PTI, Hindu Business Line, Financial Express on various aspects like LTG Fair Share, 6 GHz spectrum allocation, etc.



ISRO SATELLITES TO BE MOVED TO HIGHER BAND

5G, 6G services: Portion of 6 GHz likely to be reserved

TELECOM TALK

- Decision on reserving spectrum of the 6 GHz band expected by year-end or early next year
- Telecom operators and technology firms have different views on the band
- While the telcos want the band for 5G/6G services, tech firms are advocating for its use for public Wi-Fi

According to officials, since India has a lot of the world's 6G, 4G, and other spectrum, it is considering the same. It would then create a whole spectrum of equipment and technology enabling telcos to use the band.

China has given it to telecom operators. At the World Telecom Conference (WTC) in Beijing, India, however, had opposed China's proposal to allow the use of the band for telecom mobile networks.



'India needs 2 GHz spectrum to run 5G at optimum level'

RIGHT CALL 6GHz spectrum band is the optimum solution and must be allocated

COAI's (the private sector) view is that India's spectrum is not enough. It needs to be around 20 GHz to run 5G at optimum level.

But the industry has got only 10 GHz from the last spectrum auction.

"We have a 2 GHz band that needs to be allocated for 5G at optimum level. The 6GHz spectrum band is the optimum solution and must be allocated," says COAI.

Further, it said that in order to run 5G at optimum level, the spectrum needs to be around 20 GHz. It also said that the 6GHz spectrum band is the optimum solution and must be allocated.



India can lead global collaboration for 6G: Experts opine during India Mobile Congress 2024

As a leader in the 6G Alliance, India aims to collaborate with partners to advance research, standardization, and public-private partnerships. Joint research efforts, policy harmonization, and the development of skilled manpower are key priorities. Through these initiatives, India seeks to position itself as a global leader in 6G technology and drive innovation and development.

Online Desk - ETGovernment
Updated On Oct 19, 2024 at 09:52 AM IST



Telcos' Call for Fair Share from OTTs Due to Poor Data Revenues, says DoT Official

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The debate over sharing the revenue of large traffic generators with telecom operators has emerged because increasing data consumption is not resulting in sufficient income growth for Indian telcos, a senior official of the Department of Telecommunications said on Friday.

"There are issues like the fair share of revenue with OTT (over the top players). It largely arises because there is an insufficiency of revenue from the growth of data (consumption) itself," Manish Sinha, member (finance) at the department, said at the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2024 that concluded Friday. "If a big innovation were to happen and the revenue goes to the OTT, what OTT is doing is how much advertising is there," he said.

Telcos are looking at alternative revenue streams to earn returns on the investments made in the deployment and expansion of 4G and 5G networks, Sinha said.

"People always look at alternative revenue streams, and then then try to get returns from the re if they are not generating enough on their own," he said, adding that innovation and development of new 5G use cases are essential in the current times.

Lately, discussions around a fair-share charge have intensified in India, with the telecom industry seeking a share of revenue from OTT service providers to maintain mobile network infrastructure and invest sustainably in 5G and future networks.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) representing India's private telcos stated that nearly 80% of the data traffic carried by telcos was generated by a handful of OTT service providers who, despite charging from consumers, do not share their revenue.

A lobby group representing startups, mid-sized enterprises, and even small businesses, has also been formed to lobby for a fair share of revenue from OTT firms should be exempted from sharing revenue to help fund innovation.

Amazon, Netflix, Hotstar and Disney+ are considered as some of the large OTT service companies.

OTT players have rejected the demand.

Adoption of Draft Guidelines for Unsolicited Business Communications

An industry submission was made by COAI to the Department of Consumer Affairs on the Adoption of Draft Guidelines for the Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communications, 2024, urging them to promptly implement draft guidelines to curb spam calls and messages, emphasizing the need for a proactive approach targeting the source of Unsolicited Business Communications (UBC). COAI also advocated for extending regulatory oversight to OTT communication platforms to address evolving spam tactics.

Media Coverage: The industry submission was covered in publications like Economic Times, Business Standard, Hindu BusinessLine, Financial Express, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, NDTV Profit, Inc42, etc.

Industry · 3 Min Read

Telcos seek to expedite notification of DoCA's norms against spam calls, messages

The consumer affairs ministry had set-up a committee comprising representatives from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and telcos such as Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), and COAI, to formulate the draft norms.





Ashutosh Kumar · ETTelecom
Updated On Nov 28, 2024 at 03:10 PM IST

Read by: 881 Industry Professionals

Telcos call for prompt notification of guidelines to curb spam calls

TELCOSPEAK

- Sources of spam now reaching thousands more platforms.
- In the existing regime to stop spam, OTT not covered
- Rules enforced by DoT extend to telcos, not users

Business Standard

Notify Rules Fast to Penalise those Sending Spam: Telcos

Our Bureau

Kolkata: India's leading telecom carriers are urging the Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA) to promptly notify guidelines, using its powers under Section 38 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, for ensuring stringent action against those bombard subscribers with unsolicited and unwarranted business communications (UBC).

This, since telcos believe the present Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation, 2018 (TCCPCR), formulated under the TRAI Act, 1997, is "an incomplete and ineffective solution," as there are several entities in the ecosystem responsible for UBC that are outside the telecom regulator's jurisdiction.

"UBC is a violation of consumer rights, and the DOCA and Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communications, 2024, will cover all sources whether through the tele provider channel or communication channels," the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in a letter dated November 26 to Nidhi Khare, consumer affairs secretary.

The telecom sector association requested the DoCA to address the menace by directing them to discontinue the communication of spam after the source of such communication. This is a reactive approach that does not fix the issue at its root, and, therefore, the system continues to be misused by such users through continued innovative approaches," COAI director general S P Kochhar said in the letter.

He added that telcos, who are non-intrusive intermediaries, and therefore, exempted from liability under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2008, are being held responsible for actions of certain users/businesses over whom they have no control. "Such entities also do not fall under the jurisdiction of either DoT or TRAI, who can only regulate the telecom licensee."

Kochhar added that with advancing digitisation and increasing transition of voice calls to OTT communication platforms, which fall outside the regulatory oversight of the telecom ecosystem, it is becoming more difficult for carriers to track such calls and block them.

Hence, telcos believe the concerned ministries and departments, especially the DOCA, need to intervene to protect consumers as an ecosystem is not adequately empowered to deal with such outside its domain.

As reported in its October 15 issue, the DoT has decided to regulate marketers under regulations and fix accountability as well as concerted bid by authorities to curb pesky messages and calls.

Meanwhile this, DoT has sent a reference to TRAI, seeking recommendations on the framework for regulating telemarketers through an authorisation mechanism.

NEED STRINGENT RULES

Companies believe the present regulation is "an incomplete and

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Spam calls: Telcos dial Dept of Consumer Affairs to expedite notification of guidelines

S. Ramesh Singh
New Delhi

Telecom companies have dialled the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) to expedite notification of guidelines to take stringent action against persons/entities spamming ordinary consumers with unsolicited and unwarranted business communications (UBC).

In a letter to the Secretary, DoCA, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, the telcos have said that under the guidance of the Department, the Committee (TRAI, BSNL and other telcos) prepared draft guidelines which addressed several pressing issues pertaining to mapping responsibility to the source of UBC.

'PLUG HOLES'

"Through these guidelines, the Department can fill an important gap in the existing regulatory regime to curb UBCs," COAI said in the letter, which has been assessed by Business Standard.

advancing digitisation and voice calls transitioning to over-the-top (OTT) platforms, which presently fall outside the regulatory oversight of the telecom ecosystem.

The letter said with advancing digitisation and voice calls

businessline · it is

ACTION AGAINST UBC:

"The beneficiary users/businesses (sources of UBC) are getting smarter and are utilising more available platforms beyond traditional voice calls/ messages to reach out to the consumers," said the letter addressed to DoCA Secretary Nidhi Khare. The COAI, which represents telcos like Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea, said that under the current dispensation, such communication is regulated only through the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation, 2018 (TCCPCR), which has been formulated under the TRAI Act, 1997 and therefore it was incomplete and ineffective solution, as there are several entities in the ecosystem that are responsible for the spam that are outside the jurisdiction of TRAI.

The TCCPCR imposes obligations on ISPs to address this menace by disconnecting service of those users who are the source of such communication," it said.

"Therefore, it requires an inclusive effort from different ministries and departments, most importantly the Department of Consumer Affairs, to intensify efforts to ensure that consumer rights are sufficiently protected in the telecom ecosystem today is not adequately empowered to deal with such entities outside its domain," SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI, added in his letter.

It can be noted that the DoT is working on regulating unsolicited (spam) calls and messages and has sought TRAI's recommendations.

Illegal sales usage of wireless devices - Repeaters and Jammers

COAI made a submission to DoT on illegal sales of wireless devices, urging the Department of Telecommunications to ban the sale of illegal Wi-Fi routers operating on the 6 GHz spectrum band, citing concerns over unauthorized transmissions and potential legal liabilities for consumers.

Media Coverage: Coverage in PTI, PTI Bhasha, Economic Times, Hindu BusinessLine, ET Telecom, Republic World, Zee News Hindi, ThePrint, etc.

Illegal Jammers are Disrupting Services: COAI

NEW DELHI Telecom industry body COAI has written to the Department of Telecom that illegal jammers and repeaters installed at educational institutes, homes and firms are deteriorating mobile networks service quality, resulting in call drops and low data speed for consumers. The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), has urged the department to act

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Updated 18:59 IST, February 4th 2025

Illegal Jammers at Educational Institutes; Boosters at Home, Firms Hampering Mobile Ser

REPUBLIC

Telecom industry body COAI has written to the telecom department that illegal jammers and repeaters installed at educational institutes, homes and firms.

Tech News • 3 min read
Reported by: Press Trust Of India

जैमर, बूस्टर से सेवा पर असर

नई हिन्दुस्तान चार निव चार

विभाग से कहा है कि शैक्षणिक संस्थानों, घरों और फर्मों में गैरकानूनी जैमर एवं बूस्टर लगाए जाने से मोबाइल नेटवर्क सेवा की गुणवत्ता खराब हो रही है।

सेल्युलर ऑपरेटर्स एसोसिएशन ऑफ इंडिया ने दूरसंचार विभाग को गैरकानूनी जैमर एवं बूस्टर के खिलाफ कार्रवाई करने और सभी राज्यों को पत्र लिखकर सूचित करने का अनुरोध किया है कि ऐसे उपकरणों का उपयोग दूरसंचार अधिनियम के तहत अपराध होने के कारण तुरंत रोका जाना चाहिए।

Telcos urge DoT to check illegal sale of repeaters and jammers

S Ramesh Singh
New Delhi

Telecom operators have written to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), requesting immediate intervention in illegal sale/usage of wireless devices, including repeaters and jammers. They complained that "this sale" is deteriorating network service, resulting in call drops and low data speeds.

They urged DoT to issue notices or impose penalties on online platforms engaged in the sale of illegal repeaters/jammers.

"The telecom industry has voiced its concerns multiple times as to how the possession of illegal repeaters and jammers has become a major nuisance, and is one of the biggest causes for customers facing mobile network issues like call drops and low data speeds, especially in densely populated localities," industry representative Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said.

COAI represents telecom majors including Bharti Air-

Consortium (WPC), issuing notices to the e-commerce firms, to stop the sale and/or facilitation of sale of wireless jammers, such boosters are still available for sale on online platforms including Amazon.

"It is highly concerning that despite the WPC's efforts, such boosters are still for sale on online," the COAI said.

businessline

some instances wherein during the routine monitoring of the network, degradation in Received Signal Strength Indicator (RSSI) parameter was observed.

APPROVAL OVERTHIDE

"Upon further analysis for such degradation, it surfaced that the degradation of RSSI parameters is primarily due to installation of jammers by educational institutions/schools, without obtaining necessary approval from the competent authority and installation of illegal boosters by households/companies and so on," it said.

The telcos complained that despite Wireless Power

Therefore, COAI has urged the DoT to take immediate steps towards the formation of adequate rules for adoption by all concerned entities during the provisions of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, including digitisation of the end-to-end process for better enforcements, starting from complaint by telecom service provider (TSP) till removal of such equipment.

Also, the Department should write to all State Chief Secretaries that use of illegal repeaters/jammers is an offence under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 and to stop use of such illegal equipment.

Policy • 2 Min Read

Formulate rules under Telecom Act to halt illegal sale of signal jammers: Telcos to DoT

This comes against the backdrop of recent incidents in some states concerning the installation of illegal jammers to halt mobile network signals for unexplained reasons which are adversely affecting the Quality of Service (QoS) for mobile users.



ET Telecom



Ashutosh Kumar • ETTelecom
Updated On Feb 4, 2025 at 08:37 PM IST

Read by:
782 Industry Professionals

Implementation of Message Traceability for safe SMS Service

A statement was issued by COAI on TRAI's directive on full traceability of commercial messages by Principle Entities (PEs). COAI affirmed full readiness of TSPs to implement TRAI's PE-TM binding directive from December 11, 2024, ensuring traceability of all commercial messages. The move aimed to curb fraud and enhance trust in digital communication through extensive stakeholder collaboration.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered by news wires PTI and IANS; leading print publications like, The Times of India, The Economic Times, Business Standard, The Financial Express, The Telegraph, etc.; and online publications like, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, Zee Business, ET Government, ThePrint, Communications Today, and many others.



TRAI's recommendations on the Framework for Service Authorisations

COAI expressed its concerns on TRAI's Response to DoT's Back Reference on its recommendations on the Framework for Service Authorisations to be Granted Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, whereby it expressed concerns over the dilution of TRAI's role and the lack of regulatory clarity on SATCOM and OTT services under the new telecom framework. It warned that ignoring these issues could impact investor confidence and sectoral parity.

Media Coverage: The statement to media was covered by the news wire UNI; leading print publications like, Business Standard and The Financial Express; and online publications like, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol and Voice&Data among others.

Telcos fear Trai role may get diluted in new regime

JATIN GROVER
New Delhi, March 5

THE ROLE OF the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) as the sector regulator is likely to get diluted once the new telecom authorisation regime kicks in, telecom operators said on Wednesday.

Their apprehension is on the grounds that the department of telecommunications (DoT) has said it may not consult Trai for any changes in the terms and conditions of the authorisation regime, which will replace the current licensing regime.

In the current licensing regime, telcos have a contractual agreement with the government which is a regulatory arrangement. While the government has the power to carry out amendments to the terms and conditions, the same can be challenged in a court of law.

However, under the authorisation regime, telcos say they would lose the power to challenge as the government will have the power to change any terms and conditions without prior consultation with the regulator.

Though the Trai has recommended that DoT must consult them, the DoT differs from this view.

The telecom operators maintain that the current contractual nature of the licensing regime must be retained to provide regulatory stability and encourage investments in the sector.

"It is noted with concern that the role of Trai may be diluted as it has been stated that with respect to minor or procedural amendments, the licensor (DoT) may seek recommendations from the regulator," said SP Kulkarni, director general of Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

Telecom operators maintain that the current contractual nature of the licensing regime must be retained

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Telcos hit out at DoT, Trai on service norms

Say concerns on OTT communication services, satcom have not been addressed

SURABH CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 5 March

Telecom operators on Wednesday claimed that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) have not addressed their concerns over the new OTT communication services and satellite communication. In the proposed service authorisation framework,

in a major overhaul of the licensing ecosystem in the telecom sector, the telecom regulator has lost its recommendations. It has created three new categories of authorisation to be granted to service providers in line with the new Telecom Act, 2023.

In a key move, it has also called for replacing the current license regime based on a "contractual agreement" with the government, in favour of a system where the government has the power to change the terms and conditions of the authorisation regime without consulting the regulator.

But the concerns have not been addressed so far.

"While this aspect has not been addressed, further, in the back reference procedural amendments, the licensor may not seek recommendations from the regulator," it said on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, COAI has been advocating satellite communication should be used for enhancing the coverage in uncovered rural areas and has stated the need for a level playing field between terrestrial service providers and satellite service providers in all other areas.

"This important issue has not been addressed by DoT or by Trai. This non-addressed will adversely affect investors' sentiments," it said.

Business Standard

दूरसंचार विभाग और ट्राई से नाराजगी

शुभायन चक्रवर्ती
नई दिल्ली, 5 मार्च

दूरसंचार कंपनियों ने बुधवार को दूरसंचार विभाग और भारतीय दूरसंचार नियामक प्राधिकरण (ट्राई) पर प्रस्तावित सेवा प्राधिकरण ढांचे में ओवर-द-टॉप (ओटीटी) संचार सेवाओं और उपग्रह संचार पर उनकी चिंताओं का समाधान नहीं करने का आरोप लगाया।

दूरसंचार क्षेत्र में लाइसेंसिंग व्यवस्था में बड़े बदलाव के तहत दूरसंचार नियामक ने पिछले साल सुझाव दिया था कि नए दूरसंचार अधिनियम, 2023 के अनुरूप देश में दूरसंचार सेवाओं को कवर करने के लिए ऑथोराइजेशन की तीन नई श्रेणियाँ बनाई जाएँ। उसने सरकार के साथ 'अनुबंध वाले समझौते' पर आधारित वर्तमान लाइसेंस व्यवस्था को बदलने को भी कहा है। वह ऐसी प्रणाली के पक्ष में है, जिसमें सरकार दूरसंचार कंपनियों को ऑथोराइजेशन देती हो। रिलायंस जियो, भारती एयरटेल और वोडाफोन आइडिया का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाली सेल्युलर ऑपरेटर्स एसोसिएशन ऑफ इंडिया (सीओएआई) ने कहा कि इससे बड़ी 'नियामकीय अनिश्चितता' पैदा हो जाएगी और 'पूर्वा-नुमान' लगा पाना भी मुश्किल होगा। इस कारण दीर्घावधि निवेशकों और उनके निवेश को खतरा हो सकता है। लेकिन इस संबंध में चिंताएं अभी तक दूर नहीं की गई हैं।

इस बीच, सीओएआई ने इस पर जोर दिया है कि गैर कवरेज वाले ग्रामीण इलाकों में कवरेज बढ़ाने के लिए सैटेलाइट संचार का उपयोग को बढ़ावा देना चाहिए। उसने **Business Standard** सेटकॉम सेवा प्रदाताओं के बीच समान अवसरों का जरूरत बताई है।

उसने कहा है, 'इस महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे पर दूरसंचार विभाग या ट्राई ने ध्यान नहीं दिया है जिससे निवेशकों की भावनाओं पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ेगा।'

Non-applicability of Private Networks (CNPNS) in India

The CNPN perspective on TRAI recommendations on network authorisations under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, was expressed by COAI, wherein it was asserted that India's robust public telecom infrastructure, including expanding 5G networks, makes captive private networks largely redundant. COAI urged policymakers to avoid spectrum fragmentation and focus on strengthening existing TSP-led solutions to drive industrial growth and digital inclusion instead.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered by PTI, Economic Times, Business Standard, Financial Express, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, etc.

No Need for Cos to Establish Pvt Networks: COAI

New Delhi: Given the wide coverage of telecom networks in the country, there is no need for enterprises to establish their private networks, industry body COAI said on Thursday. The government has given an option to enterprises to establish their private networks for captive operations like network for factory functions etc by directly procuring spectrum from the Department of Telecom. Telecom operators have opposed the move. The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea etc, cited Trai observation that though the [redacted] network) was put in place.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

up. —PTI

Private telecom service providers, TRAI at odds over new spam call/messages rules

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

THE private telecom service providers are at odds with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) over its new spam rules, citing that the regulations were issued without addressing all relevant issues.

The TRAI last week introduced new rules under the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPR), 2018, aimed at curbing Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC), also known as spam calls and messages. The new rules mandate that consumers can now report spam within 7 days of receiving it, up from the earlier 3-day limit. Additionally, telcos must take action against unsolicited senders within 5 days, down from the earlier 30-day limit. In case of failure to implement these regulations, telcos face a fine of up to ₹10 lakh.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) represents all telcos, and a more comprehensive approach is required to tackle the issue effectively. The association emphasized that in the current digital landscape, both over-the-top (OTT) communication providers and telemarketers (TMs) have become major stakeholders in messaging. Therefore, it is critical to establish a regulatory framework to ensure accountability from all stakeholders in the ecosystem, including OTT platforms and telemarketers' principal entities.

"We had submitted to TRAI that the only feasible and operational way of handling UCC is through the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPR), 2018. We had also suggested that the only feasible and operational way of handling UCC is through the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPR), 2018. We had also suggested that the only feasible and operational way of handling UCC is through the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPR), 2018."

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Telcos' private 5G networks can meet enterprise connectivity requirements: COAI

Kochhar stated that telcos' private networks will remove from the enterprises the burden of managing a complex network, that is outside of their domain of expertise.

ETTelecom

Updated On Feb 27, 2025 at 12:04 PM IST

Read by: 778 Industry Professionals

5G

NEW DELHI: There is no relevance of dedicated captive private networks in India as the extensive and dense availability of public fifth-generation or 5G telecom infrastructure can serve enterprises' connectivity needs, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said on Thursday.

No need for pvt 5G networks in India: COAI

SUBHASAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 27 February

Given India's widespread telecom penetration, the need for enterprises to establish private 5G networks is virtually non-existent, telecom operators reiterated on Thursday.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea said Captive Private Networks or Captive Non-Public Networks (CNPNS), which are primarily regulated in geographically vast and sparsely populated regions where public telecom connectivity is limited or non-existent, do not really apply in the Indian ecosystem.

The statement comes days after the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) brought out its latest recommendations on network authorisations under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. TRAI has proposed a separate authorisation framework for CNPN providers under Section 3 of the Act, with the scope of establishing, maintaining, operating and expanding the networks for enterprises.

The Act allows the government to assign spectrum administratively to entities in defence, law enforcement, broadcasting services, disaster management, navigation, telemetry, in-flight and maritime connectivity, as well as for safety and operations of mines, ports and oil exploration, among others.

Adani Data Network, a unit of Adani Enterprises Limited, remains the only company currently has the permission to set up a private 5G network. The company had earlier said it plans to create a private 5G network for its operations, and establish a unified digital platform that will accelerate the Adani group's digitisation of its core infrastructure. It is yet to announce any progress.

Telcos have consistently pushed back against private enterprises establishing their own captive 5G networks, arguing the endeavour will fail since entities from non-telecom backgrounds would not have the financial and technical know-how to set up private 5G networks.

On Thursday, COAI pointed out TRAI's paper has vindicated this position.

"Though the licensing framework for CNPN was put in place in June 2022, the CNPN services have not picked up," TRAI had said. "The Providers are not equipped to meet enterprise demand for 5G applications through advanced solutions such as spectrum leasing and network slicing within their existing public networks, to handle different types of traffic simultaneously," COAI said.

"This model ensures the efficient utilisation of a critical national resource while preventing unnecessary fragmentation of spectrum that would arise from setting aside dedicated frequencies for private captive networks," it stressed.

Captive networks may struggle to keep pace due to the high costs associated with "the risk of technological obsolescence being significant" for them, COAI said.

Business Standard

Amendment to TCCCP Regulation, 2018 issued by TRAI

COAI expressed concern over TRAI's recent TCCCP amendment, stating that it fails to regulate delivery telemarketers and OTT communication platforms — key contributors to UCC. It also objected to increased penalties on TSPs, who are intermediaries, and urged for a broader regulatory framework to ensure accountability from all stakeholders.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered by PTI, UNI, IANS, PTI Bhasha, New Indian Express, Economic Times, Business Standard, Hindu Business Line, Financial Express, The Telegraph, Hindustan Times, Mint, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, NDTV Profit, etc.

Penalise 'telemarketers, principal entities who are originators and beneficiaries' of spam calls

Vishal Sanghvi
Hindustan Times

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has asked the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) not to penalise telecom operators for unsolicited calls and messages to consumers.

A recent amendment by TRAI stated that anyone who does not register with telecom companies to send commercial communication and send unsolicited messages will be treated as a spammer by the regulatory watchdog.

COAI had submitted that TSPs, being only intermediaries and not the originators and beneficiaries of the commercial communications, should not be penalised. "COAI is disappointed to see that the amendment is not taking into account the fact that TSPs are only intermediaries and not the originators and beneficiaries of the commercial communications," said Kochhar.

COAI had submitted that TSPs, being only intermediaries and not the originators and beneficiaries of the commercial communications, should not be penalised. "COAI is disappointed to see that the amendment is not taking into account the fact that TSPs are only intermediaries and not the originators and beneficiaries of the commercial communications," said Kochhar.

businessline.

Telcos hit back at Trai's latest spam norms

Say telemarketers, OTT communication platforms need to be regulated

AMENDED REGULATIONS

- COAI has asked the regulator to not penalise TSPs for sending unsolicited calls and messages to consumers.
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Business Standard

अवांछित कॉल पर ट्राई के नियम

दूरसंचार कंपनियों पर अधिक जुर्माने से सीओएआई नाखुश

एखोले। नई दिल्ली: अवांछित कॉल और संदेशों को रोकने के लिए ट्राई के नए मानकों ने दूरसंचार कंपनियों के लिए जुर्माने में काफी वृद्धि की है। दूरसंचार कंपनियों के संयुक्त संवैधानिक अधिकारों पर सीओएआई ने सख्त आपत्ति जताई है।

सीओएआई ने यह भी कहा कि अवांछित संदेशों के लिए कोई प्रतिबंध नहीं होने से स्पेम का बाढ़ आ रहा है।

दैनिक भास्कर

REGULATOR TO SOON COME OUT WITH CONSULTATION PAPER

To Check Spam, Trai Plans to Regulate Telemarketers

Telcos had said the latest rules will be of little help as marketers and OTTs were outside their ambit

Boosting Action

Telcos say the latest rules will have little impact on telemarketers and OTTs.

1.5-1.7 billion

commercial messages are sent every day in India, totaling about 15 billion messages.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

COAI has asked the regulator to not penalise TSPs for sending unsolicited calls and messages to consumers.

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COAI Year-End Perspective for 2023 and 2024 Outlook

To mark the close of 2024, COAI issued a comprehensive year-end press note, reflecting on key developments in India's telecom sector and outlining a forward-looking outlook for 2025.

In addition, DG COAI shared his insights in a featured podcast and print interview with The Hindu BusinessLine, highlighting the industry's achievements, ongoing challenges and future priorities.

Media Coverage: Coverage in PTI and other publications like Economic Times, Financial Express, ET Telecom, BW Businessworld and others. Also, authored articles of DG COAI were published in ET Telecom, Communications Today, Tele.Net Magazine, among others.

Telcos see fresh challenges from direct-to-mobile technology

BUREAU
New Delhi, December 23

TELECOM OPERATORS, REPRESENTED BY THE Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), on Monday said the proposed direct-to-mobile (D2M) technology will pose new challenges. The new technology will create a separate broadcasting network, thereby undermining market fairness, they said.

Once implemented, D2M services would pave the way for streaming television and video content directly to mobile phones, without an internet connection. Consumers will get to choose between internet streaming and D2M to view live television on their mobile handset.

"COAI has called for transparent auction of the sub-6GHz (5.15-5.82 MHz) spectrum, envisaging a two-tiered system,"

BROADCASTING NOW

- Once implemented, D2M services would pave the way for streaming television and video content directly to mobile phones, without an internet connection.
- Consumers will get to choose between internet streaming and D2M to view live television on their mobile handset.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Additionally, the suggestion for a dedicated D2M network for business alerts is unnecessary, as cellular networks effectively deliver alerts via the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) platform, Kochhar added.

Moreover, analysts said telecom operators won't be in a position to offer replacements for TSP services. Also, free spectrum allotted by MIB (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) is an unfair edge for current service providers," representatives of telcos told Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) earlier.

Currently, the government is auctioning the 5.15-5.82 MHz spectrum for D2M services. The TRAI has proposed a two-tiered system for the same. The first tier will be for terrestrial television (TV) broadcasting and the second tier will be for mobile-to-mobile (M2M) services.

Proposed Quality of Service Norms Impractical: COAI

Despite meeting service benchmarks, challenges remain: Telecom lobby

NEW DELHI: The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Monday said the proposed quality of service (QoS) norms for 5G networks are impractical and unrealistic. The lobby said the norms are too stringent and will be difficult to implement. It also said the norms are not aligned with the current state of the market.

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

According to TRAI, the QoS norms for 5G networks are too stringent and will be difficult to implement. The lobby said the norms are too stringent and will be difficult to implement. It also said the norms are not aligned with the current state of the market.

Q & A. Telecom Act provisions must be enforced in letter and spirit: COAI

S Ronendra Singh
New Delhi

SP Kochhar, Director-General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), shared how 2024 was a foundational year for the telecom industry and how it will build upon it this year.

Excerpt:

How would you evaluate the performance of India's telecom industry in 2024?

This year, the telecom industry has achieved a lot of milestones. We have seen a significant increase in 5G network coverage and a steady growth in subscriber base. The industry has also made significant progress in digital transformation and innovation. However, there are still challenges that we need to address, such as the need for more spectrum and the need to improve the quality of service.

What are the key gaps in the industry in terms of deployment of 5G networks in India?

Whenever we deploy a new technology, there are two or three essential things. One is the willingness to roll out the networks and to implement that spectrum. In India, we require 2GHz of spectrum in the mid-band to roll out effective 5G networks. But, we have got just about 800 MHz of spectrum — deficient by 1,200 MHz. That will cause a lot of problems going forward.

What possibilities do you see of AI being used in telecom?

Earlier, the things which were semi-automated or done manually, will now get fully automated and we will have improvements in the network usage and in the efficiency of the networks. This is already happening, as far as embedded AI is concerned. Generative AI will benefit the businesses which are growing on 5G platforms, and those will come out with innovative applications, which are specific to their verticals and which can generate more profit for them at a lower cost.

COAI DIGICOM Summit 2025

The first-ever DIGICOM Summit was organized by COAI which witnessed 30+ key speakers participating across 5 panel discussion, 10+ keynote sessions and attendance of 200+ industry leaders.

Media Coverage: The first-time event garnered coverage in PTI and IANS, The Hindu, The Indian Express, The Economic Times, Business Standard, The Hindu Business Line, Amar Ujala, Dainik Bhaskar, The Pioneer, ET Now and NDTV Profit and key online publications like DD News, The Financial Express, Mint, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol, Zee News, BW Businessworld and many more.

[REPORT]
DIGICOM SUMMIT 2025

Paving the way for a Viksit Bharat

The COAI-Voice&Data event brought industry leaders together to drive 5G, AI, and policy reforms, shaping India's path to a connected and inclusive economy.



BY PUNAM SINGH

VOICE & DATA

The COAI and Voice&Data recently concluded the inaugural DIGICOM Summit in Delhi, focusing on Engineering Viksit Bharat. As a platform for industry leaders to discuss key developments in the communication sector, the DIGICOM Summit explored strategies to bridge the digital divide and drive equitable growth, ensuring that technological progress reaches and uplifts every section of society across India.

Delivering the keynote address, the Union Minister of Communications Jyotirajya Scindia stated that India's digital future is being shaped today. He shared the government's vision of a 'Digitally Viksit Bharat', highlighting initiatives such as the allocation of 687 MHz of additional spectrum to accelerate telecom growth and the introduction of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, which replaces outdated colonial-era laws with a modern legislative framework. Scindia also announced plans to establish 100 Intelligent Villages, aimed at bridging the digital divide and transforming rural connectivity through advanced technology.

The Minister emphasised how digital connectivity empowers students by providing access to digital education and supports farmers in optimising resources with advanced technologies. With 70% of India's population under 35, these efforts are designed to unlock the country's potential.

www.coaiindia.com

सीओआई ने डिजिकॉम शिखर सम्मेलन का किया आयोजन

गुडगांव, 17 जनवरी (अ): देशवासियों को दूरसंचार व डिजिटल क्षेत्र की जानकारी देने के लिए भारतीय दूरसंचार उद्योग की सेल्युलर ऑपरेटर्स एसोसिएशन ऑफ इंडिया (सीओआई) द्वारा डिजिकॉम शिखर सम्मेलन 2025 का आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें केंद्रीय संचार मंत्री ज्योतिराज दिव्य एम. सिंधिया, ट्राई के अध्यक्ष अनिल कुमार लाहोटी और अन्य उद्योग जगत दिग्गज भी शामिल हुए।

सीओआई के अध्यक्ष अभिजीत किशोर का कहना है कि सम्मेलन में काया। उपभोक्ताओं को अधिक से अधिक सुविधा उपलब्ध कराई जाए, इस पर भी खुलकर मंचन भी कहा कि दूरसंचार भारत के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में लगभग 7 प्रतिशत का योगदान दे रहा है और 14 प्रतिशत - 16 प्रतिशत के बीच दशकीय सीएजीआर से बढ़ रहा है।

कार्यक्रम में शामिल संस्थानों के प्रतिनिधि।



दैनिक जागरण

Cabinet approves refarming 687 Mhz spectrum: Scindia

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has approved the refarming of 687 MHz spectrum for mobile services and more will be done based on the study by a committee of secretaries put in place by PM Narendra M. Modi.

Speaking at a press conference, the Minister said the government would need 2,000 MHz of spectrum by 2030 and the Cabinet decision takes the total quantum of radio spectrum available for mobile services in mid-band, which are frequencies in the range of 1000 MHz to 6000 MHz.



Jyotirajya Scindia

1 MHz. on industry handling the available small chunks of spectrum available for mobile services in mid-band, which are frequencies in the range of 1000 MHz to 6000 MHz.

THE HINDU

Refarmed Airwaves of 320 MHz Available for Use, says Scindia

Some spectrum for immediate use, the rest by 2026 and 2028-30: Telecom Minister

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

New Delhi, January 17: Union Minister of Communications Jyotirajya Scindia said on Monday that the government has approved the refarming of 320 MHz of spectrum for mobile services and more will be done based on the study by a committee of secretaries put in place by PM Narendra M. Modi.

Speaking at a press conference, the Minister said the government would need 2,000 MHz of spectrum by 2030 and the Cabinet decision takes the total quantum of radio spectrum available for mobile services in mid-band, which are frequencies in the range of 1000 MHz to 6000 MHz.

Scindia said the government will ensure that the requirement of the industry is met and there are no barriers in the digital telecom landscape of the country.

He said there is a gap of roughly 300 MHz. So, the aim is not only to meet the demand of the industry but also to ensure that there are no barriers in the digital telecom landscape of the country.

The government, through refarming, liberates or arranges spectrum of services based on the demand and where the resources can be used efficiently.

Cabinet clears refarming of 687 MHz spectrum, more to come: Scindia

Press Trust of India
New Delhi

The Union Cabinet has approved the refarming of 687 MHz spectrum for mobile services and more will be done based on the study by a committee of secretaries put in place by PM Narendra M. Modi.

Speaking at a press conference, the Minister said the government would need 2,000 MHz of spectrum by 2030 and the Cabinet decision takes the total quantum of radio spectrum available for mobile services in mid-band, which are frequencies in the range of 1000 MHz to 6000 MHz.

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businessline.

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The government, through refarming, liberates or arranges spectrum of services based on the demand and where the resources can be used efficiently.

Thought Leadership Articles

This year, COAI shared insights across leading publications on key industry themes, including spectrum management, Artificial Intelligence, Terahertz technology, 5G monetization, private networks, India Stack, and telecom's role in achieving SDGs. Articles also explored trends like increasing data consumption, skilling for 5G and 6G, autonomous networks, cybersecurity, quantum communications, IoT, telecom manufacturing and the LTG/OTT fair share model. COAI's thought leadership further addressed the evolving Indian telecom landscape, including fixed wireless access, startup collaboration and year-end sector outlook for 2025.

Media Coverage: Articles published in leading publications like Economic Times, Financial Express, Deccan Herald, The Hindu, ET Telecom, ET Government, The Pioneer, Rajasthan Patrika, Tele.net Magazine, Voice&Data Magazine, Communications Today and others.



Digital Media Presence & Engagements

Fair Share from LTGs

The fair-share issue has been actively highlighted across social media platforms, with articles and videos shared to boost engagement and reach a wider audience.


COAI  @ConnectCOAI · Apr 11

Data's booming. Networks are straining. FairShare is the fix-empowering faster 5G, stronger connectivity and a truly Digital India. Watch how we make it happen!

#5GForAll #StrongerNetworks #ConnectivityMatters #FairShare




COAI  @ConnectCOAI · Sep 9, 2024

Lt. Gen Dr. S.P. Kochhar, DG, COAI, highlights the need for [#fairshare](#) from LTGs for advancing [#telecom](#) infrastructure to meet rising data demands and ensuring fair cost distribution for network [#sustainability](#) and progress.

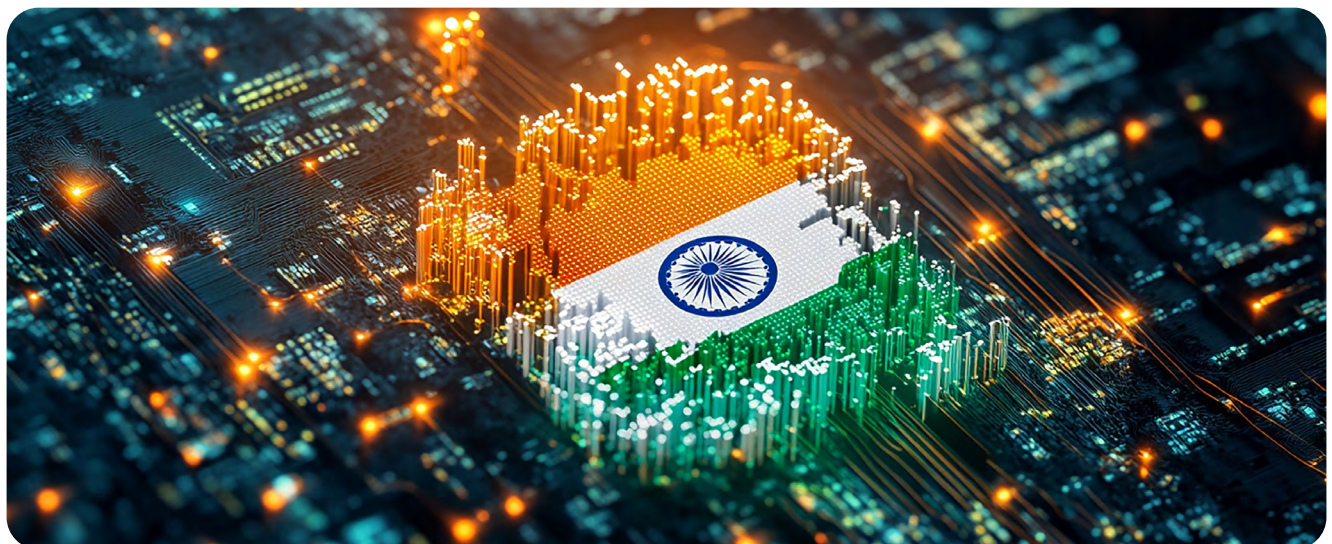
Read More:



financialexpress.com
Telecom sector must get a fair share
 Large traffic-generating platforms are propagating fallacies on proposal for responsible fair-share ...

COAI DIGICOM Summit 2025

The DIGICOM Summit 2025, hosted by COAI, spotlighted India's journey towards a "Digitally Viksit Bharat." A series of engaging videos and visuals were shared across digital platforms to highlight the event's key moments and amplify its impact.



India Mobile Congress 2024

India Mobile Congress 2024, held alongside the prestigious WTSA 2024, marked a significant step towards building a digitally empowered society. The event was actively promoted across social media, with timely updates and a collaborative post-event teaser capturing key highlights, ensuring strong visibility and engagement from stakeholders across the ecosystem.



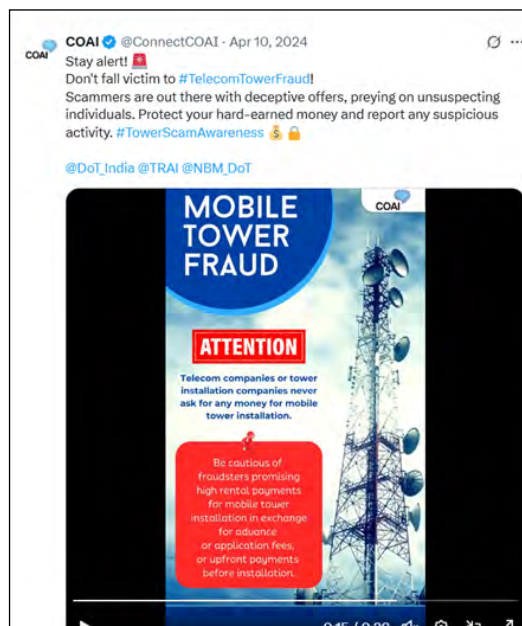
Frauds and Scam Awareness posts

To serve the public interest, we creatively shared key information on recurring frauds and scams, aiming to raise awareness and help people stay informed and protected.



Illegal Boosters and Mobile tower Fraud

To serve public interest, we shared key information on recurring frauds like mobile tower scams and illegal signal boosters, highlighting their risks, misuse and consequences to raise digital awareness.



Artificial Intelligence

Updates and opportunities in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have been actively promoted across digital platforms, complemented by insightful articles featuring the DG's perspectives.



5G In India

India's swift 5G rollout has cemented its position as a global leader in the telecom landscape. Through its digital platforms, COAI has consistently spotlighted 5G's transformative role, spanning sectors, powering innovation and driving skill development - highlighting the nation's strong stride toward digital leadership.

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Mar 1

How do you see India shaping the global telecom landscape? Comment below with your insights!

#5GIndia #TelecomLeadership #MakeInIndia #DigitalTransformation #IMC2025 #GlobalTelecomLandscape #MWC25



India's telecom sector is witnessing an unprecedented transformation—bridging urban-rural gaps, strengthening domestic manufacturing, and positioning itself as a key global player

PMO India and 2 others

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Mar 11

5G Powers the Future of the **#Metaverse**! Experience ultra-fast speeds, seamless connectivity and next-level immersion. From VR to AR, 5G unlocks a smarter, more interactive digital world. Are you ready for the future?

#5GMetaverse #FutureConnected #NextGenTech



Unlocking a Faster, Smarter and More Immersive Metaverse with 5G

DoT India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Feb 18

5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) is revolutionizing telecom by expanding broadband to rural areas, delivering high-speed internet without fiber dependency & enhancing network scalability. With rapid deployment in urban & suburban regions it is bridging the digital divide like

Show more



Expanding Broadband Access to Rural Areas | High-Speed Internet Without Fiber Overhaul | Enhancing Network Capacity and Scalability | Quick Rollout for Urban and Suburban Areas

DoT India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Feb 27

Big dreams need fast connections! 5G is empowering startups & small businesses with instant cloud access, **#AI**-driven marketing and seamless remote work—affordable, efficient and scalable. The future of **#business** starts here!

#5GForGrowth #SmartBusiness #StayConnected

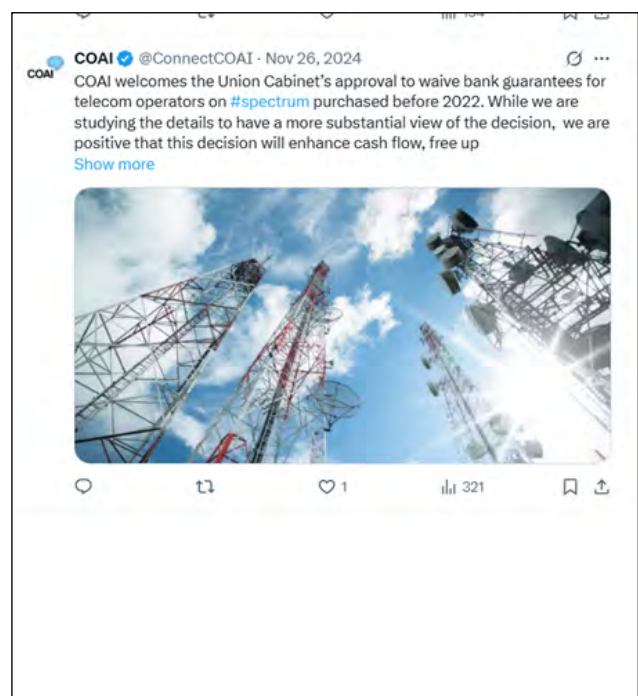
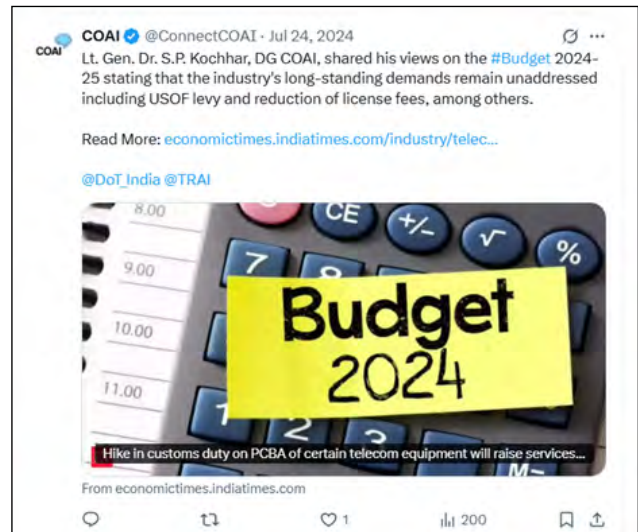


Instant cloud access for startups and SMEs | Enhanced e-commerce with real-time customer engagement | Reliable remote work capabilities | AI-driven marketing and personalization | Affordable automation for small businesses

DoT India

Government Initiatives, Policies and reports

Regular updates on telecom-related policies, reports and Government developments have been effectively amplified through tweets and engaging creatives, helping debunk myths and enhancing public understanding of key issues.



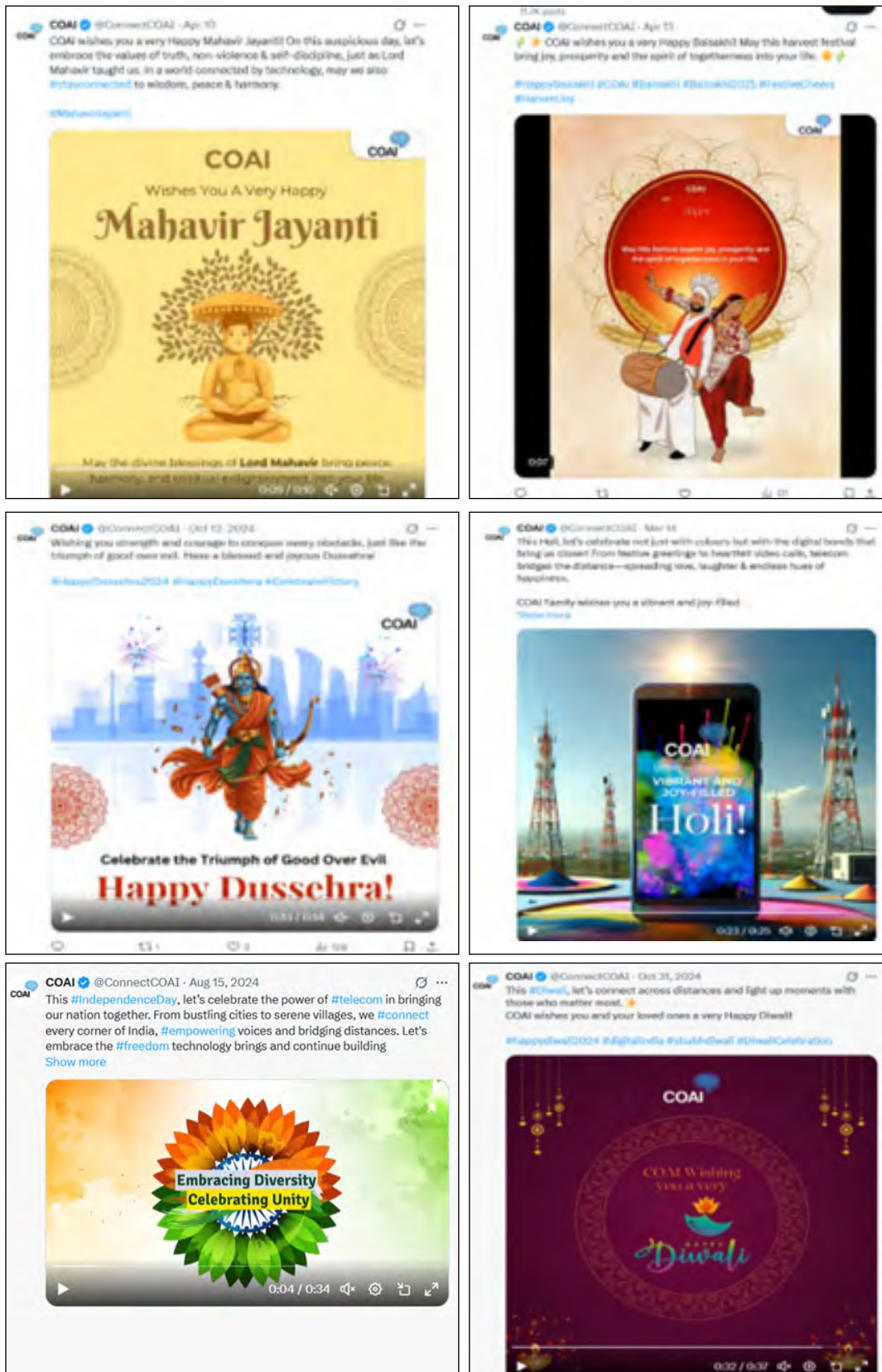
Gati Shakti & Broadband Committee Meetings

Updates on Gati Shakti discussions and State Broadband Committee meetings with various States and UTs across India were actively shared on social media to keep the digital audience informed and engaged.



Festivals And Celebrations

Engaging and informative content around festivals and key observance days relevant to the telecom sector has been actively shared across social media, driving community connection and spreading awareness.



Events

COAI's participation in events has been extensively covered, with live tweets and posts keeping the digital audience informed and engaged with the latest updates.



11

Media Visibility Snapshot

Telcos call for tax reforms in Budget

WIRED IN. Operators' body says recommendations will bring in digital empowerment, inclusivity for the sector

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Telecom operators, including Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone-Idea, on Wednesday called for urgent tax reforms in the upcoming budget to revitalise the sector.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said its recommendations to the Finance Ministry will help improve the sector's financial well-being, which is crucial for fulfilling the government's mission of digital empowerment and inclusivity.

Key recommendations include a request for abolishing regulatory levies — universal service obligation fund (USOF) and annual gross revenue (AGR) exemption of service tax on additional AGR dues exemption of customs duty extension of carry forward of business losses from eight years to 16 years; and exemption of GST.

Considering the huge capital investment, especially for 5G deployment, the COAI recommended that the USOF levy be abolished.

Alternatively, the government consider suspending



NETWORKING. Given the huge capital investment, especially for 5G deployment, the COAI urged that the universal service obligation fund levy be abolished.

The USO contribution of 5 per cent of AGR till the existing USOF corpus of around 680,000 crore is exhausted.

SERVICE TAX The operators urged the government to exempt service tax on the additional AGR liability arising from the Supreme Court judgment.

Specifically, relief has been requested for the exemption from service tax payment for

the period from April 2016 to June 2017, and on various services issued in November 2018.

The COAI proposed that the government prescribe a streamlined, time-bound process for claiming a cash refund of service tax paid under the reverse charge mechanism (RCGM).

The COAI also requested that the licence fee be urgently reduced from 3 to 1 per cent.

Similarly, on AGR, the industry body said the present definition covers revenue from all telecom activities and, therefore, the definition of GR should be precise, stipulating that the revenue from activities for which no licence is required should not be a part of GR.

On extension of carry forward of business losses, the COAI said the existing provision provided eight years limitation to business losses, which may result in lapse of

losses for companies that have longer recovery journey. The telecom operators' body urged the government to address the above concerns by introducing a special regime under Section 72 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, wherein business losses can be carried forward and set off till 16 assessment years from the existing eight.

CHECKING MISUSE

To prevent misuse of the extended time limit, a restriction can be put on dividend distribution, wherein any dividend distribution within five years from the date of utilisation or set-off of unutilised losses by the company can attract additional dividend distribution tax of 25 per cent (in addition to TDS), up to the amount of losses set-off by the company, on which no deduction of credit will be available to the company or shareholders, it said.

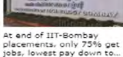
"Over the past decade, the government has undertaken reformative steps to fuel India's digital ambitions and achieve accelerated growth. We hope the government will consider these recommendations," S P Kochhar, Director General, COAI, said.

COAI names Voda Idea's Abhijit Kishore as chairperson; Airtel's Rahul Vatts vice-chair

Pankaj Doval / TNN / Jun 11, 2024, 23:10 IST

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New For You



NEW DELHI: Telecom industry body COAI on Tuesday named Vodafone Idea's COO Abhijit Kishore as its chairperson and Bharti Airtel's Chief Regulatory Officer Rahul Vatts as vice chairperson, effective June 2024.

The announcement comes after COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) concluded its annual general body meeting for 2023-24.

TELCOs' EXPECTATIONS FROM BUDGET 2025

INDUSTRY CAN'T KEEP INVESTING WITHOUT ANY ROI

TOP NEWS @ This Hour

India Needs Bigger Reforms To Become \$10 Trn Eco: IMF Dy MD

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Banks Said To Ask RBI To Delay April Liquidity Rule

ANALYSING TELECOM REVENUE FRAMEWORKS

newsX

THE ROUNDTABLE

With PRIYA SAHGAL

Illegal Jammers are Disrupting Services: COAI

NEW DELHI Telecom industry body COAI has written to the Department of Telecom that illegal jammers and repeaters installed at educational institutes, homes and firms are deteriorating mobile networks service quality, resulting in call drops and low data speed for consumers. The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), has urged the department to act against illegal jammers, and notify states that their use is an offence under the Telecommunications Act 2023.

5G spectrum auction outcome to boost connectivity: COAI

Delhi-based COAI, which represents incumbent telecom carriers, also said that it "eagerly anticipates the successful completion of 5G spectrum auctions."

ET Telecom

Updated On: Jun 26, 2024 at 02:59 PM IST

Head To: 5G Industry Professionals



NEW DELHI: The outcome of ongoing spectrum sale will lead to increased coverage and enhanced connectivity, and lay a foundation for the digitally-empowered country, a telco group Tuesday said.

● SP KOCHHAR, DIRECTOR GENERAL, COAI

'5G rollout has been fast, but there's been no RoI'

Two years after the launch of 5G, while India has seen the fastest rollout of the network, the same cannot be said with regard to return on investments for the operators. Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) director general, SP Kochhar, tells **Jatin Grover** that enterprise use cases did not pick up as expected. Excerpts:

It's been two years of 5G. How are you seeing the technology takeup?
Not only in India, but worldwide, when 5G was started, there was a lot of hope that machine and human interface would happen. A huge amount of machines would come on the network and earnings would come from the enterprise segment. Even at that point, telcos knew that 5G would not be very useful. If consumers are given the 5G data at a higher cost than 4G, they may not take it. However, giving it at the same cost, would lead to increase in infrastructure cost for telcos, that was known. This has proven right. Industry 4.0 did not work that is why sensors or IoT (Internet of things) use cases did not come up and therefore enterprise 5G did not see much takeup. It will come but has been postponed for now.

Then do you think for the capex in 5G, we will not get ROI?

Business decisions worldwide have gone wrong on 5G. They were driven by manufacturers of 5G, they created a hype and then countries wanted to take the lead.

We are seeing the capex has been reduced by telcos in India also just because ROI is not seen at the moment. Business assumption was that sensors will come for enterprise use cases but those have not come.

Would it have been right to shift directly to 6G from 4G?

No, because the complete technology has shifted. It is not possible because machine and human interface has come for the first time in 5G. Earlier it was not

BUSINESS DECISIONS WORLDWIDE HAVE GONE WRONG ON 5G. THEY WERE DRIVEN BY MANUFACTURERS OF 5G, THEY CREATED A HYPE

there. It was possible from 2G to 4G.

Telcos are still pitching for OTT regulation when the Telecom Act has stated that it's not in the purview of telecom department. Why this insistence?

When the draft came, OTT was mentioned, but after that it was removed. If you see the Act, it has the scope to include OTT communication services. The devil lies in the rules. The theme of the Act is generic, the rules will be specific. The Act has talked about communication services, rules will decide which communication service will be

included. To say that OTT has been taken out of that, it is not correct, it can happen anytime.

On the right of way (RoW) issues, do challenges still persist?

This is a Central subject. It is mandatory for the state governments to follow the Telecom Act. The problem of RoW with regard to permission for digging and higher charges is coming from some Central as well as state bodies such as forests, railways, etc, which have their own rules. We are trying to get that resolved.

There is a debate on the 6 GHz band. Why do telcos need that band?

There is no imperative for Wi-Fi to ask for 6 GHz. When we bought spectrum in the mid-band that is 3300 MHz, we could get only 800 MHz because the band was not available. Our requirement to give 5G as projected is 2 GHz, which is 2000 MHz. There, we have a deficiency of 1200 MHz. That cannot be made up, no matter how much densification you do. That will affect the quality of services. In 6 GHz, 1200 MHz is available and we can utilise that to give good quality services. Otherwise, the cost of infrastructure will increase as we would then need to have towers at a short distance.

New Service Quality Rules Tough, will Hike Cost Burden: Telcos

Say move won't bring great benefits to users either; plan to raise the issue with telecom min

Kiran Rathee

New Delhi: Telcos have termed the new service quality rules set by the regulator as tough, which would increase their cost and compliance burden and plan to raise the issue with telecom minister Jyoti Radhika Scindia soon, executives aware of the details told ET.

The industry, in a separate statement, said no regulator in similar economies have introduced such norms. The telcos stressed that while the rules will entail a cost burden on them, benefits to consumers won't be great.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) announced new parameters to measure quality of service (QoS) for telecommunications on Friday and the rules will come into effect from October 1.

The regulator not only made the rules more stringent but also incorporated provisions that will mandate telcos to compensate consumers in case the network outage is not resolved in a particular time frame. Financial penalties have also been increased, while the reporting around performance has to be done on a monthly basis and at a cell level. Currently, telcos report on a quarterly basis and till a base station level.

"The firms will take up the QoS matter with the minister in their second round of meeting. There are certain things which are not in control of telcos, and the minister will be apprised about the matter holistically," an executive said.

Another executive said the industry will also engage with Trai in highlighting the pain points. During the meetings with Trai officials, which followed a consultation process on the matter, the industry had pointed out the difficulties in meeting the new parameters, which weren't accepted by the sectoral watchdog.

Pain Points

Trai's new QoS rules effective from October 1

COAI says no similar regulations in comparable economies

New rules will mandate telcos to compensate customers for extended network outages

Fixed-Line users to get compensation for delayed repairs

BHAVIN G

"While we are disappointed with the stringency of these new regulations, we remain committed to engaging constructively with Trai on QoS-related matters," the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in its statement. The body represents all the three private telecom operators—Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The association said the QoS parameters prescribed in the new regulations have not been introduced by any other regulator in other similar economies. "These changes are expected to significantly

increase the compliance as well as the cost burden on telecom operators, and without commensurate benefits for the customers," said SP Kochhar, director general, COAI.

As per Trai, in case of a network outage in a district for mobile services for more than 24 hours, telcos will need to provide a rebate on rent for postpaid customers and extend the validity of connection for pre-paid customers by equal number of affected days.

For fixed-line services, users will have to be compensated if the fault in their network or service is repaired after three days.

COAI raises concerns over Trai's service authorisation regime

The new service authorisation regime in the telecom sector must continue to retain the contractual nature of the present licenses to ensure uniformity, regulatory certainty and protection to investors who commit long-term capital to the sector, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), said on Monday. The telecom regulator had last week recommended three new categories of authorisations be created to cover the gamut of telecom services in the country in line with the new Telecom Act, 2023. COAI said the recommendation further provided an opportunity for Trai to facilitate and reduce the burden on the industry by suggesting financial reforms as badly required by the sector. **BS REPORTER**

Telcos seek abolition of USOF levy

RUN-UP TO THE BUDGET 2024-25

FE BUREAU New Delhi, July 10

THE CELLULAR OPERATORS Association of India (COAI), which represents telecom companies like Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, on Wednesday reiterated its demand that the universal services obligation fund (USOF) levy should be abolished. It also requested the finance ministry to lower the licence fee besides seeking exemptions on customs duty on import of telecom equipment and GST, among others.

Currently, telecom operators pay 8% of their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to the government as licence

THE WISH LIST

■ Telcos pay 8% of their adjusted gross revenue to the govt as licence fee

■ Of this, 5% goes to USOF and 3% to the general exchequer

fee. Of this, 5% goes to the Digital Bharat Nidhi (previously known as USOF) and 3% goes to the general exchequer. "Considering the huge capital that telecom service providers (TSPs) have to invest in the current scenario, especially for the deployment of 5G, COAI recommends that the USOF levy be abolished," it said.

"Alternatively, the government may consider the suspension of the USOF contribution of 5% of AGR till

the existing USOF corpus of approximately ₹80,000 crore is exhausted," it added. COAI further said the licence fee should be brought down to 1% from 3% at the earliest, so that it covers only administrative costs by the department of telecommunications.

On the custom duty, COAI said a higher duty of 20% on import of telecom equipment puts an additional financial burden and the same should be reduced to zero. "Until

5% of AGR should be abolished till existing USOF corpus of around ₹80,000 crore is exhausted, urges the COAI

■ Licence fee should be brought down to 1% from 3% at the earliest

20% on import of telecom equipment should be reduced to zero

high-quality equipment is available domestically at competitive prices, COAI urges the government to reduce customs duties for 4G and 5G network products, as well as other related items, to Nil," it said.

COAI has also requested for a special regime under Section 72 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, wherein the business losses can be carried forward and set-off till 16 assessment years, from the existing 8 years.

Telcos Seek 6 GHz Waves for 5G Play & 'Fair Share' from OTT Cos



PTI

New Delhi: Telecom industry body COAI on Wednesday said it expects the government to allocate the 6 GHz band spectrum for 5G network expansion and roll out a fair share data network usage policy to make big apps pay for the excessive traffic generated by them.

COAI, whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and others, released its priority wishlist for the newly formed government at the Centre on Wednesday.

The body wants the government to increase the number of test labs for accelerating the process of clearing network gear to enable expeditious roll-



COAI released its priority wishlist for the newly formed government at the Centre on Wednesday network deployment through the use of the 6 GHz spectrum. "India has made a giant leap in 6G innovations through initiatives, such as Bharat 6G Alliance and Bharat 6G Vision which envisage India to be a leader in 6G innovations and deployment." "To achieve this mission, the industry needs massive spectrum resources which can deliver the higher capacity required by 6G. Thus, we urge the government to strategically plan the 6 GHz resources for 6G as well," COAI director general SP Kochhar said in a statement.

[TELECOM TALK]
NETWORK OPERATIONS

LT GEN DR SP KOCHHAR

BUILDING SMARTER HIGHWAYS IN TELECOM'S NEW DIGITAL FRONTIER

Autonomous networks enable telcos to streamline operations, enhance services, and reduce costs, driving efficiency in a data-driven, hyperconnected world



The role of telecom networks has transformed significantly over the past few years, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As people increasingly turned to digital applications to perform everyday tasks, telecom networks evolved to provide the necessary digital infrastructure to address these requirements, be it education, entertainment, job shopping, banking, healthcare needs, agriculture or others.

To address the evolving connectivity demands, Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have integrated additional platform-based services covered by modern technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain and edge computing. While these efforts have significantly improved customer experience, they have turned network management into a complex, costly and time-consuming process. This is where the role of network automation comes in.



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6 GHz mid-band spectrum to enable effective expansion of 5G networks in India: COAI

Kochhar said there is a mismatch between the quantum of spectrum available to telcos and the geographical territory that they have to cover with their 5G networks.



Ashutosh Kumar • ETTelecom
Updated On Mar 20, 2024 at 10:47 AM IST

Read by:
2744 Industry Professionals



SP Kochhar
Director-General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)

NEW DELHI: The spectrum shortage for effectively expanding fifth-generation or 5G mobile networks in India will be fulfilled by the crucial 6 GHz frequency band, according to an industry association.

Telcos urge Scindia: Equal rules for OTTs & relax service norms

JATIN GROVER

New Delhi, August 23

TELECOM OPERATORS — Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea — along with the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Friday urged communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to relax the recently notified quality of services norms and pressed for their demand for similar rules and regulations for OTT communication apps.

From the telecom operators side — Reliance Jio was represented by its managing director Pankaj Pawar, whereas Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra, BSNL CMD Robert Ravi, and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) director general SP Kochhar also attended the meeting.

This was Scindia's second meeting with the operators in the last month. Notably, DoT has formed six committees to improve the sector. These panels involve OEMs (original equipment makers), satellite communication companies, telecom service providers (TSPs), Internet service providers (ISPs),

LIST OF DEMANDS



■ Telcos seek equal rules for OTT apps

■ Meeting with Jio, Vodafone, COAI, BSNL

■ Scindia's second meeting this month

■ DoT formed six improvement panels

■ Telcos want OTTs under Telecom Act

■ COAI says new QoS rules raise costs

■ Seek revenue-sharing with large traffic generators

Telegram, etc.

The COAI in its recent submission to Trai said: "As per our understanding, OTT communication services are covered under the new Telecom Act as an access service". This is against the stance of the former communications minister Ashwini Vaishnaw who clarified that the Telecom Act will not regulate the OTT apps.

According to telcos, OTTs are in competition with telcos looking at the nature of services and should be brought under the authorisation regime. The telecom companies have been demanding a revenue-sharing model with large traffic generators on telecom networks.

Among other key issues, COAI specifically raised the issue of stringent quality of services norms notified by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) recently and urged for some sort of relaxation, officials said.

In their earlier representation, COAI had said the new quality of services (QoS) rules notified by Trai will increase compliance and cost burden for telecom operators without any benefits to con-

R&D experts in the telecom sector.

Officials said that telcos raised their concerns around the uneven level playing field between telcos

COAI Accuses Tech Giants of complicity over Fair-share Fees

Our Bureau

Mumbai: Telecom operators' body has called out the complicity of large traffic generators (read: Google) who refuse to pay their fair share for using telecom networks on the pretext that it would hurt startups and small businesses, but at the same time, delist startups for not paying app store service fees.

Ironically, these same LTGs (large traffic generators) vehemently oppose the proposal for making a fair-share contribution to telecom infrastructure costs required to carry their disproportionately large traffic. SP Kochhar, director-general of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in a statement on Tuesday. Delhi-based COAI represents incumbent telcos Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea.

"Moreover, the LTGs' advocates contend that this fair-share charge would deter small players/startups from being able to operate on the network," Kochhar said.

He clarified that telcos have reiterated that only four-to-five LTGs which generate mammoth traffic volumes would be required to contribute to networks costs instead of burdening smaller players, startups, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which generate low traffic.

"Therefore, these global behemoths seem fully prepared to oust the home-grown Indian cos based on pure financial motive, with no regard for this vital ecosystem of players who bring innovation and entrepreneurship to the fore rate low traffic."

"Google on March 1 booked applications by 10 local developers, citing non-compliance with its billing policies. To this extent, telcom and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and the minister of state for IT Raviyev Chandrasekhar held a meeting with the representatives of startups and Google on Monday to find a long-term solution.

Through ahead of the Monday meeting, Google reinstated the prior delisted apps, including Info Edge India's Naukri, 99acres, Shiksha; People Interact's Shadi; online dating platform TrulyMadly; podcast app Rukla FM; and online video streaming platform Airtel, among others.

"It is rather surprising that these LTGs, which are generally global corporates based in foreign countries, are ready to evict non-paying small businesses as they expect the 'immense value' that their platform provides to the apps, themselves prefer to enjoy a free-ride over the TSPs' networks, while profiting heavily from them," Kochhar said.

He added that these LTGs continue to make misleading claims that the proposed fair-share charge would hurt the startups, MSMEs, and smaller players and constrain innovation, "which is clearly contrary to the truth".

Telcos have been pressing LTGs for a fair-share charge, which they say, will help them address rising network costs amid the upsurge in data consumption brought about by the fifth-generation networks. A proposal that has been vehemently rejected by technology companies, as well as, over-the-top (OTT) players.



SP KOCHHAR
Director-General, COAI

Telecom sector must get a fair share



SP KOCHHAR

Director-General, Cellular Operators Association of India

THE INDIAN TELECOM industry has found itself at the centre of a heated debate on fair-share contributions from large traffic-generating (LTG) platforms to telecom service providers (TSPs). The industry has vehemently advocated a system where LTGs contribute equitably to the infrastructure costs incurred for the upkeep and advancement of networks.

Its stance centres on ensuring sustainability and progress of the network infrastructure to efficiently deliver the ever-increasing data traffic, chiefly due to the rise of LTGs and their business offerings. In the wake of rising monetisation in various forms, it is crucial to reiterate the key considerations to debunk the dubious arguments being put forth by some vested interests.

Unravelling double standard

One of the concerns raised is that fair-share charges might lead to double-charging over the same mobile tariffs for internet access, and the other including monetisation and other over-the-top (OTT) services.

While the Government often espouses fair-share charges, they simultaneously generate substantial revenues from both users through subscription fees, and also advertising income. This is in stark contrast with the declaration of TSPs to provide affordable digital connectivity, even in challenging financial conditions. A demonstrative case is the TSPs' refusal to pay for the massive advertising gains, further fuelling the apprehensions they've manifested about the impact of such charges on their revenues and profitability.

Burdening end consumers

It is also recommended that TSPs raise consumer tariffs to recover the network expenses and ensure the sector's sustainability. This contradicts the LTGs' purported commitment to provide affordable and accessible services and experiences. TSPs have promptly dismissed this proposal, emphasising their decision to refrain from increasing consumer tariffs for this purpose, which aligns with the national objective of promoting affordable digital connectivity for all. This willingness of the LTGs to shift the financial burden onto end consumers while safeguarding their own profits raises questions about their commitment to the welfare of citizens and our economy.

Unconvincing international precedents

LTGs have sought to support their claims by invoking international precedents, particularly citing the lack of a similar fair-share charge imposed by some European Union nations. However, recent global market developments provide a different picture. For instance, the recent settlement between Netflix and SK Broadband in South Korea signifies a potential trend for resolving disputes on network usage fees. Furthermore, the European Union's investigation into the massive advertising gains, further fuelling the apprehensions they've manifested about the impact of such charges on their revenues and profitability.

Large traffic-generating platforms are propagating fallacies on proposal for responsible fair share contribution to network costs

Lowering Broadband Costs for Consumers Act

Another pivotal development is the introduction of the Lowering Broadband Costs for Consumers Act, 2023 in the US Senate. Sponsored by three senators, this bipartisan legislation clearly establishes the need for various "edge service providers" which generate disproportionately high traffic, to contribute to the infrastructure costs up to a certain digital connectivity affordable for end-users.

The Act proposes that large-edge providers that annually account for more than 3% of the total internet traffic in the US and consume \$1 billion in revenues be assessed to share the financial load of delivering affordable digital connectivity. The act's endorsement of this need by LTGs to contribute to network costs vindicates the position of the Indian telecom sector.

LTGs have also tried to mislead the public through various campaigns, claiming that a fair share policy will harm small players. Such misleading campaigns persist despite TSPs' repeated clarifications that they are seeking contributions exclusively from the big players - the multinational giants that cause a substantial portion of the network costs. This response is a clear attempt to divert attention from the LTGs' substantial contribution to the network costs. On the other hand, the Indian telecom sector has established its support for the interests of small indigenous players. The public may already be aware, through, that the LTGs are attempting to shift attention away from the core industry, using small players as a shield.

Telecom revenue dynamics and flawed revenue claims

LTGs claim that their presence on telecom networks increases customer retention, but this is questionable. Telecom networks existed and served users long before the advent of over-the-top (OTT) platforms, and a large portion of internet users do not use OTT apps.

Moreover, the sheer number of telecom users in India creates a sizeable market for OTT platforms, granting them a distinct advantage without corresponding investments in telecom networks. This situation implies increased capital and operational expenses, exacerbating the challenges faced by telecom providers.

LTGs have also made flawed revenue claims, citing data revenue as growth. However, their simplistic before-and-after comparison overlooks crucial factors, including monetisation capital and operational expenses which outweigh the revenue, inflation, and other variables. A substantial portion of TSP revenues is also being eroded due to the cancellation of OTT communication services.

With the advent of digital convergence across sectors, the need for a fair-share mechanism that ensures equitable contributions by entities benefiting from its operations. Without such a government directive, a big portion of the revenue in the telecom industry may continue to be channelled offshore, depriving the Indian economy of its deserved share.

SEEKING FAIR SHARE USAGE POLICY

Telcos renew their demand for regulation of OTT payers

Want revenue share arrangement for high data traffic

JATIN GROVER
New Delhi, June 12

WITH THE NEW telecom minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia taking charge, telecom operators have once again put forward their demand that over-the-top players share their revenues with them because of a large quantum of data, especially video, which they consume.

They have also reiterated their demand for bringing OTTs under a regulatory framework, similar to the one which applies to telcos.

The operators, through the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), have urged the new minister to implement a fair share data network usage policy.

According to telcos, such a policy would ensure that the large traffic generator pay a share of their revenue to telcos that provide the complete infrastructure for their data requirements.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, who was also the communications minister in the Modi 2.0 government, had said that OTT regulations will not come under the ambit of Telecom Act and the same will be examined by ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY). Vaishnaw continues to be the IT minister in the new government.

"The rapid surge in data over telecom networks has put tremendous pressure on telecom networks, leading to severe quality of service (QoS) issues, drastically impacting telecom operators' customer experience," said SP Kochhar, director general of COAI.

According to Kochhar, even as these large OTT apps do not contribute anything to the infrastructure but they earn revenue in the form of subscription fee and advertisements which are transferred to their parent companies.

"This causes huge loss, estimated to the tune of ₹10,000 crore, to the government," Kochhar said, adding that the same is expected to increase further, especially with the emergence of newer AI applications and technologies.

Besides the issues of fair share from OTTs, telecom operators want the new government to address issues around spectrum pricing and related revenue concerns. They have urged the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) to revisit spectrum pricing recommendation and do away with the minimum rollout obligations, giving telcos the freedom to

MOST IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- A fair share data network usage policy for large traffic generators to pay their revenue share to TSPs
- Say in absence of OTT regulation, govt losing ₹10,000 crore
- Open up 6 GHz band for telcos
- No minimum rollout obligations post spectrum acquisition
- Trai should revisit spectrum pricing recommendation as costs are high
- Addressing equipment testing and certification challenges
- Resolve issues around telecom equipment theft

decide the rollout strategy upon acquiring the spectrum.

This is because India's spectrum costs a proportion of annual recurring telecom revenues are much higher than key global markets such as China, Germany, UK, Brazil or even neighbouring Pakistan, COAI said, citing a report by CLS-ON. On the other hand, average revenue per user (ARPU) of telecom operators is among the lowest in the world.

In its recent communication to Trai, COAI pitched for a policy on spectrum for its efficient management and allocation. The association has asked for at least 10-year auction schedule with spectrum availability.

Among other key things, the telecom operators want DoT to resolve issues around the 6 GHz band and allocate the same to telcos, as the band is essential to expand 5G services.

Officials, however, said resolution of issue around allocation of 6 GHz band will take time as the government is also currently studying the requirement of the band for 5G services. Besides, 6 GHz spectrum is currently being used by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

In their recommendation, telcos have also asked the government to increase the number of test labs to support the testing of a massive volume of equipment. They have also sought exemption on customs duties for products that enter India for testing and certification temporarily.

COAI has also urged the government to take strict actions in a bid to curb telecom equipment theft.

COAI urges govt to intervene against illegal sale of Wi-Fi 6E wireless routers

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

THE Cellular Operator Association of India (COAI), an association of the three major private telecom service providers in the country, urged the government to intervene against the illegal sale of Wi-Fi 6E wireless routers in the country via e-commerce websites and online platforms to consumers.

The association, which represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, in a letter to the Department of Telecommunications said such Wi-Fi 6E

products, which utilizes 6 GHz spectrum band in delineated manner, is illegal. These routers operate on 6GHz band, whose use has not been assigned for purpose of providing Wi-Fi, nor has it been designated licence-exempt, telcos argue.

"We would like to submit that DoT is yet to take a policy decision related to the 6 GHz band utilization. Therefore, any sale of such Wi-Fi 6E products, which utilizes the 6 GHz spectrum band in delineated manner, is illegal and such sale would only result in unauthor-

ized transmissions in our country," said SP Kochhar, Director-General, COAI.

TP-LINK, Deco, Netgear, and Google, among others, are the vendors selling Wi-Fi 6E routers in India via platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, Moglix, and others, as per the data presented by the telecom industry association. Kochhar said as per provisions of the Telecom Act, 2023, the central government is the owner of the spectrum and the use of spectrum by any person requires assignment from the central government.

India's strides towards the design and component ecosystem in telecom

The telecom sector is evolving from a service-led growth model to a robust manufacturing ecosystem

The telecom sector in India has witnessed a paradigm shift in its growth strategy, moving from a traditional service-led model to a robust manufacturing ecosystem. This transition is driven by the government's strategic vision to foster indigenous innovation and self-reliance in the telecom industry.

Key initiatives include the establishment of the Telecom Design and Component Ecosystem (TDCE) and the launch of the Telecom Design and Component Ecosystem (TDCE) initiative. These efforts aim to create a comprehensive ecosystem for the design and manufacturing of telecom equipment and components, reducing the industry's dependence on foreign suppliers.

The government has also launched the Telecom Design and Component Ecosystem (TDCE) initiative, which focuses on promoting the design and manufacturing of telecom equipment and components. This initiative is part of the broader Make in India campaign, which aims to attract foreign investment and create jobs in the manufacturing sector.

Furthermore, the government has launched the Telecom Design and Component Ecosystem (TDCE) initiative, which focuses on promoting the design and manufacturing of telecom equipment and components. This initiative is part of the broader Make in India campaign, which aims to attract foreign investment and create jobs in the manufacturing sector.

The industry has responded positively to these initiatives, with several major players announcing plans to set up manufacturing facilities in India. This move is expected to boost the domestic manufacturing ecosystem and create a sustainable growth model for the telecom sector.

Bank guarantee waiver will ease telcos' financial burden, says COAI

The cabinet has cleared a proposal to waive bank guarantee for telecom operators on spectrum purchased before 2022. Telecom operators collectively have bank guarantee obligations of more than Rs 30,000 crore

Proposed Quality of Service Norms Impractical: COAI

Despite meeting service benchmarks, challenges remain: Telecom lobby

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which counts Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea as its members, has said the telecom regulator's newly proposed quality of service (QoS) norms that mandate monthly and site-to-cell level reporting are burdensome.

The industry body added that despite meeting TRAI's stringent QoS benchmarks, telcos continue to face persistent challenges like right of way (RoW) issues, spectrum interference and infrastructure constraints, hindering timely network rollouts.

"The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) introduced critical RoW amendments for uniform state laws, but timely implementation is crucial, especially for 5G expansion," the COAI said.

The industry body's views are part of a telecoms round-up for 2024 that underlines key challenges and also provides a sectoral roadmap for ringing in the next phase of growth.

The COAI said the telecom sector is a major contributor to GDP and providing employment to over 4 million people, directly and indirectly. But despite promising advancement, the industry faces several critical challenges, which can disrupt sustainable growth of the ecosystem, and accordingly, these need to be addressed on a priority basis, it added.

Among the big challenges, COAI reiterated that over the top

An Imbalance

BIG CHALLENGES

OTT players should be regulated and large traffic generators (LTGs) must be mandated to contribute towards network infra costs

(OTT) players should be regulated and large traffic generators (LTGs) too must be mandated to contribute towards network infrastructure costs via a fair share mechanism to the universal service obligation fund (USOF), especially since the latter also offer the same set of services.

According to COAI, the LTGs have strained telecom networks, compelling telcos to invest an additional ₹10,000 crore in infrastructure in 2023.

"While TSPs bear these costs, LTGs, without contributing, amass multiple incomes through subscriptions, ads and data-driven marketing, with revenues largely outside India's tax ambit," COAI director general S P Kochhar said in an official statement.

Likewise, Kochhar stressed that regulatory disparity with OTT players existing with regard to national security, user privacy and market fairness. "To add-

TELECOM OPERATORS

Call for 6GHz band allocation for mobility services

OTT platforms must be brought under spam regulations

ress this, the government should enforce traceability and user privacy rules on all calling and messaging apps, as those platforms provide similar services using the internet network."

The telecom operators have also reiterated their call for 6GHz band allocation for mobility services and bringing OTT platforms under spam regulations, saying these unregulated platforms serve as the hotbed for pesky communications.

According to the COAI, as of October 2024, over 468,522 5G BTS sites were installed, leading to a surge in the 5G user base that is projected to reach 350 million by 2026. Fixed wireless access (FWA) services, it added, had emerged as a key 5G use case in India, with connections reaching nearly 3 million within a year of launch. Jio and Airtel, which have launched 5G services nationally, had 148 million and 106 million pure 5G users respectively in the quarter ended September 2024. VI is yet to launch 5G services.

Notify Rules Fast to Penalise those Sending Spam: Telcos

Our Bureau

Kolkata: India's leading telecom carriers are urging the Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA) to promptly notify guidelines, using its powers under Section 18 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, for ensuring stringent action against those bombarding subscribers with unsolicited and unwarranted business communications (UBC).

This, since telcos believe the present Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation, 2018 (TCCPCR), formulated under the TRAI Act, 1997, is "an incomplete and ineffective solution," as there are several entities in the ecosystem responsible for UBC that are outside the telecom regulator's jurisdiction.

"UBC is a violation of consumer rights, and the DOCA guidelines on Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communication, 2024, once issued, will cover all sources of UBC — whether through the telecom service provider channel or the OTT communications channel — and will provide complete protection to consumers at large," the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in a letter dated November 25 to Nihhi Khare, consumer affairs secretary.

The telecom sector association re-



NEED STRINGENT RULES

Companies believe the present regulation is "an incomplete and ineffective solution"

presents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea (VI). The telecom lobby body added that TCCPCR only imposes obligations on mobile phone operators to address this menace of UBC by directing them to disconnect connections of users who send such communications.

"This is a reactive approach that does not fix the issue at its root, and so, the system continues to be misused by such users through continued innovative approaches," COAI di-

rector general S P Kochhar said in the letter.

He added that telcos, who are non-intrusive intermediaries, and therefore, exempted from liability under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, are being held responsible for actions of certain users/businesses over whom they have no control. "Such entities also do not fall under the jurisdiction of either DoT or TRAI, who can only regulate the telecom licensees."

Kochhar added that with advancing digitisation and increasing transition of voice calls to OTT communication platforms, which falls outside the regulatory oversight of the telecom ecosystem, it is becoming more difficult for carriers to track such calls and block them.

Hence, telcos believe the concerned ministries and departments, especially the DOCA, need to intensify efforts to protect consumers as the telecom ecosystem is not adequately empowered to deal with such entities outside its domain.

ET though reported in its October 15 edition that the DoT has decided to bring telemarketers under regulatory control and fix accountability as part of a concerted bid by authorities to curb pesky messages and calls.

Towards this, DoT has sent a reference to TRAI, seeking recommendations on the framework for regulating telemarketers through an authorisation mechanism.

Telcos' Call for Fair Share from OTTs Due to Poor Data Revenues, says DoT Official

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The debate over sharing the revenue of large traffic generators with telecom operators has emerged because increasing data consumption is not resulting in sufficient income growth for Indian telcos, a senior official of the Department of Telecommunications said on Friday.

"There are issues like the (fair share of revenue with) OTT (over the top players). It largely arises because there is an insufficiency of revenue from the growth of data (consumption) itself," Manish Sinha, member (finance) at the department, said at the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2024 that concluded Friday. "If a big innovation were to happen and there was a burst in the revenue growth, probably operators will forgive what OTT is generating and how much advertising revenue is there," he said.

Telcos are looking at alternative revenue streams to earn returns on the investments made in the deployment and expansion of 4G and 5G networks, Sinha said.

"People always look at alternative revenue streams, and then

then try to get returns from the rest if they are not generating enough on their own," he said, adding that innovation and development of new 5G use cases are essential in the current times.

Lately, discussions around a fair-share charge have intensified in India, with the telecom lobby body asking for a share of revenue from OTT service providers to maintain mobile network infrastructure and invest sustainably in 5G and future networks.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) representing India's private telcos stated that nearly 80% of the data traffic carried by telcos was generated by a handful of OTT service providers who, despite charging from consumers, do not share their revenue with the telcos.

However, the lobby group believes that Indian states, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), and even small OTT firms should be exempted from sharing revenue to help fuel innovation.

Amazon, Netflix, Hotstar and Disney+ are considered as some of the largest OTT service companies.

OTT players have rejected the demand.

(REPORT)
DIGICOM SUMMIT 2025

Paving the way for a Viksit Bharat

The COAI-Voice&Data event brought industry leaders together to drive 5G, AI, and policy reforms, shaping India's path to a connected and inclusive economy.



BY PUNAM SINGH

The COAI and Voice&Data recently concluded the inaugural DIGICOM Summit in Delhi, focusing on Empowering Viksit Bharat. As a platform for industry leaders to discuss key developments in the communication sector, the DIGICOM Summit envisages strategies to bridge the digital divide and drive equitable growth, ensuring that technological progress reaches and uplifts every section of society across India.

Delivering the keynote address, the Union Minister of Communications, Jyoti Prakash Srivastava, stated that "India's digital future is being shaped today." He shared the government's vision of a "Digitally Vibrant Bharat,"

highlighting initiatives such as the allocation of 687 MHz of additional spectrum to accelerate telecom growth and the introduction of the Telecommunications Act, 2024, which will replace the outdated 1997 Act with a modern legislative framework. Srivastava also announced plans to establish ten 5G Intelligent Villages, aimed at bridging the digital divide and transforming rural connectivity through advanced technology.

The Minister emphasised how digital connectivity empowers citizens by providing access to education and supports farmers in optimising resources with advanced technologies. With 70% of India's population under 35, these efforts are designed to build the country's

exception.

BLOG · 4 MIN READ

Telecommunications: The cornerstone for AI for Good, responsible regulations & cybersecurity

Cybercriminals are using AI to launch sophisticated masquerading techniques, capable of deceiving even the most discerning brains. In phishing attacks, they create fake emails mimicking the communications style of the target institution, with all personalized details harvested from social media and other sources.



Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar · ETGovernment
Updated on OCT 9, 2024, at 09:50 AM IST



Predicting the future is not magic, it's AI! - Deepa Vaidya, Supply Chain Today

exception.

As the world gains more intelligence 'artificially', there is nothing impossible 'virtually'. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) have become integral parts of almost all sectors worldwide, India being no

Telcos see fresh challenges from direct-to-mobile technology

FE BUREAU

New Delhi, December 23

TELECOM OPERATORS REPRESENTED by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), on Monday said the proposed direct-to-mobile (D2M) technology will pose new challenges. The new technology will create a separate broadcasting network, thereby undermining market fairness, they said.

Once implemented, D2M services would pave the way for streaming television and video content directly to mobile phones, without an internet connection. Consumers will get to choose between internet streaming and D2M to view live television on their mobile handsets.

COAI has called for transparent auctions of the 526-582 MHz spectrum, integrating it into telecom net-

BROADCASTING NOW

Once implemented, D2M services would pave the way for streaming television and video content directly to mobile phones, without an internet connection

The new technology, telcos argue, will create a separate broadcasting network, thereby undermining market fairness

works to maintain fair competition," said S P Kochhar, director general of COAI.

"Additionally, the suggestion for a dedicated D2M network for disaster alerts is unnecessary, as cellular networks effectively deliver alerts via the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) platform," Kochhar added.

Moreover, analysts said telecom operators won't be in



favour of D2M services as it directly competes with them.

"They (D2M) are direct replacements for ISP services. Also, free spectrum allotted by MIB (Ministry of information and broadcasting) is an unfair edge for current service providers," representatives of telcos told Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) earlier.

Currently, the government

is checking the commercial viability of the D2M technology.

Countering the views of telecom operators, Prasar Bharati has proposed an allocation of broadcasting spectrum in the sub-600 MHz band to telecom services.

In an earlier note to DoT, the public service broadcaster said the spectrum band, especially in 470-582 MHz, is used for terrestrial television (TV) broadcasting and the frequency is used by TV transmitters. Given that Prasar Bharati is coming up with new-age digital terrestrial television (DTT) broadcasting services or direct-to-mobile (D2M) technology, the absence of ample spectrum might restrict the expansion of the planned services.

Besides the D2M issue, telcos also voiced concern over TRAI's quality of services (QoS) benchmarks.

Industry · 3 Min Read

Telcos seek to expedite notification of DoCA's norms against spam calls, messages

The consumer affairs ministry had set-up a committee comprising representatives from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and telcos such as Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), and COAI, to formulate the draft norms.



Ashutosh Kumar · ETTelecom
Updated on Nov 28, 2024 at 03:30 PM IST

Read by:
BBI Industry Professionals

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Events & Engagements

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar meets Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia



COAI DIGICOM Summit 2025

COAI @ConnectCOAI

★ The stage is set and the future awaits! ★

Join us at #DIGICOMSUMMIT2025 as we kickstart India's biggest digital transformation journey. From cutting-edge technologies like 5G and IoT to impactful discussions on innovation and empowerment, this is your moment to witness the evolution of a Viksit Bharat.

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#DIGICOM2025 #DigitalIndia



From 5G and Edge Ready to redefine India's

COAI @ConnectCOAI

At Digicom Summit 2025, Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, emphasized the transformative power of telecom, stating, 'Telecom has evolved from being a sector to becoming the backbone of every facet of our lives. As networks, data, compute power and security converge under a dynamic policy framework, they pave the way for a digitally empowered economy and enriched citizenry. With visionary leadership and collective focus, we are set to achieve an agile and inclusive future.'

#DIGICOM2025 #EmpoweringViksitBharat #DigitalIndia #VoiceAndData #DigitalInnovation



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and Voice&Data

10:59 AM · Jan 17, 2025 · 115 Views



Curtain Raiser & Theme Launch - India Mobile Congress 2024



Telecom Networks - The lifeline of Bharat panel discussion

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

The gap between telecom expenditures and revenues is growing, reaching ₹10,000 Cr last year. Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, DG, COAI, highlighted this at the 'Telecom Networks - The lifeline of Bharat' panel discussion. He emphasized the increasing burden of data traffic on TSPs and reinforced how telecom is essential for keeping India connected and fueling its digital growth.



Centre For Digital Economy Policy Research and 2 others

Last edited 12:02 PM · May 18, 2024 · 61.5K Views



COAI
@ConnectCOAI

COAI participated in the "Strengthening Atmanirbhar: Securing Domestic Industry & Technology " symposium organized by CDEP. Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, DG, COAI, attended a panel discussion on 'Telecom Networks - The Lifeline of Bharat' with @TRAI Chairman, Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti and other industry delegates, and was moderated by @jaijit, Founder & President, @CDEPResearch.

Watch the full video here:
youtu.be/qCjplK8r2Jw?si...

#TelecomNetworks #DigitalIndia

COAI's Annual General Meeting 2023-24



5th SBC meeting

COAI
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COAI thanks Shri Prabodh Saxena, IAS (Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh) and Himachal Pradesh LSA for conducting the 5th SBC meeting. Deliberation in today's meeting will help in resolving RoW issues and boost the telecom infrastructure.

[#GovtofHimachalPradesh](#) [#NationalBroadbandMission](#) [#GatiShakti](#)
[#DigitalIndia](#)

Action Taken Report 4th SBC

S. No	Description of MoM of 4 th SBC held on 11.01.2024	Action Taken Report
3	Secretary (IT) mentioned that state head of all TSP should participate in the meeting, so that they can take important decisions during the meeting and also implement them.	All TSPs/SPs have been directed to ensure that in future Senior State head officers will attend the SBC meeting.
4	BTS Fibreisation - Sharing of Fiber:- All the TSPs to coordinate with each other to share the fibres. It was also discussed that whenever any TSP is applying for the OEC RoW approval or approval is accepted, initiation may be given to other service provider so that they can plan, accordingly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amd: 25.7% 2. BSNL: 45.71% 3. Reliance Jio: 44.88% 4. VIL: 10.90%



DoT India and 3 others

4:39 PM · Jul 24, 2024 · 247 Views

Telecom Act Workshop



The 2nd day of the [#TelecomAct](#) workshop began with Lt. Gen. Dr. S. P. Kochhar, DG, [@ConnectCOAI](#), who delivered a session on the industry's perspective. The interaction led to mutual appreciation of diverse perspectives.



3:24 PM · Jul 26, 2024 · 682 Views



Qualcomm's Snapdragon for India event



With India's 5G network rapidly advancing, Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, DG COAI, keynote speaker in today's Qualcomm's Snapdragon For India event, lauded the efforts by the industry towards the rollout of 5G and emphasized on the need for reasonably priced networks and affordable handsets.



DoT India and 2 others

ET Telecom Open RAN Summit



At the [@ETTelecom](#) Open RAN Summit, Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, DG, COAI, highlighted the exciting potential of [#OpenRAN](#) to accelerate and make [#5G](#) deployment more cost-effective. With a clear focus on enhancing system integrator roles, optimizing cost savings, and ensuring strong long-term support, the [#telecom](#) industry will be on track for a groundbreaking and successful implementation.

[#ETTelecom](#) [#Telecommunication](#) [#Transformation](#)



DoT India and TRAI

1:16 PM · Aug 1, 2024 · 1,024 Views

2nd SBC meeting of the FY 2024-25

COAI thank Shri Raj Kumar, IAS (Chief Secretary, Gujarat) and Gujarat LSA for organizing the 2nd SBC meeting of the FY 2024-25. COAI thanks the State Government for notification of Amendment to Gujarat Policy 2022. Deliberations in today's meeting will pave the way for creating a Robust Telecom Infrastructure in the Gujarat State.

#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and 4 others

4:11 PM · Sep 5, 2024 · 194 Views

SBC Meeting – 18th September

COAI thank Smt. Radha Raturi, IAS (Chief Secretary Uttarakhand) and UP West LSA for organizing the SBC meeting. Deliberations in today's meeting will pave the way for creating a Robust Telecom Infrastructure in the Uttarakhand State.

#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and 4 others

4:46 PM · Sep 18, 2024 · 177 Views

ET Telecom 5G Industries Innovation Summit 2024



India Mobile Congress 2024

COAI
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At #IMC2024, Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, in the panel on Network Security Reimagined: Protecting Digital Ecosystems stated, "As we navigate the complexities of 5G, cybersecurity is no longer an overlay but an integral part of our digital fabric. With machines, sensors, and cross-border networks blurring traditional boundaries, securing telecom networks has become critical to both national security and economic stability. The convergence of policy, regulation, and technology is essential to address these challenges effectively. In an ever-evolving threat landscape, innovative solutions—such as deep packet inspection and enterprise security operation centers—are pivotal. As the #telecom sector transforms, so must our approach to cybersecurity, ensuring resilience and safeguarding our #digitalfuture".

#IMC2024 #TheFutureIsNow



COAI
@ConnectCOAI

At #IMC2024, Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, in the panel on Balancing Digital Demand: Ensuring Level Play for Telecom Networks, emphasized, 'The challenge for telecom service providers is striking a balance between offering top-notch quality to subscribers while ensuring profitability. With Large Traffic Generators (LTGs), who are incidentally MNCs, consuming 70-80% of network infrastructure without contributing, a fair share model is essential to sustain the industry. We must ensure that LTGs collaborate with telecom networks to share the cost of infrastructure development for a truly level playing field.

#IMC2024 #TheFutureIsNow



DoT India and India Mobile Congress

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

At #IMC2024, Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, in the panel on Future Digital Infrastructure for Viksit Bharat, emphasized, that as technology advances at an unprecedented pace, #policies and regulations must adapt rapidly to keep up. The growing complexity of network boundaries, data sovereignty, and the integration of man-machine interfaces in #5G and beyond call for a seamless blend of public-private partnerships. By leveraging the private sector's expertise and integrating cutting-edge technologies like #AI and #blockchain, we can build policies that are dynamic, interactive, and future-ready.

#IMC2024 #TheFutureIsNow



DoT India and India Mobile Congress

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

At #IMC2024, Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, in the panel on Spectrum for \$1 Trillion Digital Economy, highlighted that we are witnessing a monumental shift, not just in technology, but in lifestyle itself. The rapid pace of technological advancements is outstripping the ability of traditional policy and regulation frameworks to keep up. It's time to leverage #AI-driven policy engines to match the speed of change. Just as physical highways were built to enable movement and drive economic growth, #digital highways must now do the same for data, which is the lifeblood of our #economy today.

#TheFutureIsNow #IndiaMobileCongress2024



DoT India and India Mobile Congress

MediaTek Global Connect- India Event

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

At MediaTek Global Connect- India, Lt. Gen Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, in the panel on Overview of India's Telecom Landscape, highlighted that, "Although, India is already ahead mathematically, what truly defines India is the spirit of aspiration and innovation. The Indian people will find devices that suit their aspirations and innovate to make the applications work. While the world may look to factories and think tanks, India brings innovation to the streets, driving technology forward even as we transition from 2G to 5G. This adaptability, matched with cost-conscious innovation, positions India not just as a tech consumer but a global solutions provider."

#MediaTekIndia



MediaTek India



Nokia GSMA Round Table

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

Today, Lt. Gen Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, participated in the Nokia-GSMA Round Table – Leading 5G and Beyond, an event spotlighting India's progress under the Digital India and Bharat #6G mission. The panel discussed India's growing influence in global telecom leadership and key takeaways from prestigious global events such as WTSA, GSS, B6GA Symposium, and IMC. The discussion also focused on advancements in #5G technology, global convergence on telecom standards and India's pivotal role in shaping the path toward 6G standardization at 3GPP.

#NokiaGSMA #5GandBeyond #Bharat6G #TechInnovation



GSMA and Nokia



SBC Meeting – 24th December 2024

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

COAI thanks Shri Rajeev Verma, IAS (Advisor to the Administrator, Chandigarh) and Chandigarh (Punjab LSA) for organizing the SBC meeting. Deliberations in yesterday's meeting will strengthen the telecom infrastructure and resolving the Right of Way (RoW) challenges.

#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia

@JM_Scindia
@Gulab_kataria
@neerajmittalia
@DoT_Punjab_LSA
@DoT_India

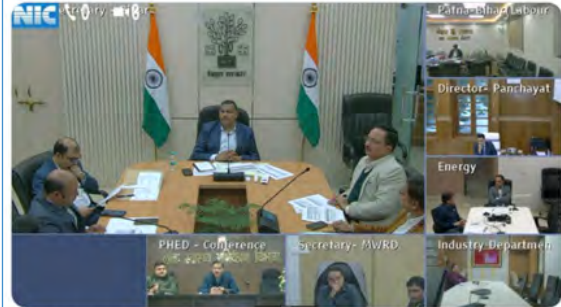


SBC Meeting – 27th December 2024

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

COAI thanks Shri Amrit Lal Meena, IAS (CS, Bihar) and Bihar LSA for organizing the SBC meeting. Deliberations in today's meeting will strengthen the telecom infrastructure and help in resolving the Right of Way (RoW) challenges.

#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and 3 others

5:25 PM · Dec 27, 2024 · 129 Views

7th SBC Meeting – 11th February 2025

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

COAI thanks Shri Atal Dulloo, IAS (CS, J&K) and the Jammu & Kashmir LSA for organizing the 7th SBC meeting. Deliberations in today's meeting will strengthen the telecom infrastructure and help in resolving the Right of Way (RoW) challenges.

#NationalBroadbandMission
#GatiShakti
#DigitalIndia



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and 3 others

11:27 AM · Feb 11, 2025 · 104 Views

SBC Meeting – 19th February 2025

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

COAI thanks Shri Pankaj Joshi, IAS (Chief Secretary, Gujarat) and Gujarat LSA for organizing the SBC meeting. COAI thanked the State Govt. for notification of Policy aligned with RoW Rules, 2024. Deliberations in today's meeting will pave the way for creating a Robust Telecom Infrastructure in the Gujarat state.

#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and 4 others

10:36 AM · Feb 19, 2025 · 113 Views

GSMA Mobile World Congress 2025



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About COAI



COAI was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society. The Association is dedicated to the advancement of modern communication through the establishment of world-class mobile infrastructure, products and services and to delivering the benefits of innovative and affordable mobile communication services to the people of India.

Industry Policy



COAI has emerged as the official voice of the Indian telecom industry that interacts directly with ministries, policy makers, regulators, financial institutions and technical bodies. It provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas between these bodies and the service providers, who share a common interest in the development of mobile telephony in the country.

Telecom Issues



COAI collaborates with other industry associations such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, GSMA, ISPAI, etc., with the objective of presenting an industry consensus to the Government on crucial issues related to the growth and development of the Indian telecom industry.

New Technologies



COAI is determined to encourage the confluence of technologies to facilitate the move towards complete convergence in communications as this could greatly help India mitigate the problems of low fixed line penetration and help realize the country's vision of becoming an Information Society.

Thought Leadership



COAI aims to dispense information and spread awareness among the national and international entities and consumers on issues pertaining to service quality and other value-added services provided by the operators to their subscribers.

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Leadership

Mr. Abhijit Kishore

Chairman



Mr. Abhijit Kishore comes with a rich tapestry of experience of over three decades with the Indian telecom industry across functions, organisations and geographies. Prior to taking on the role of COO, he was heading the Enterprise Business of Vodafone Idea Ltd as the Chief Enterprise Business Officer, where he led the transformation for Enterprise business from a Telco to Techco. Under his astute leadership, Vi Business introduced some of the smartest and newest technologies such as Integrated IoT, Managed Services and Security as a service to serve businesses in the digital era.

Mr. Rahul Vatts

Vice Chairman



Mr. Rahul Vatts is a telecom industry veteran with 30 years of experience and an expert on Telecom & Broadcasting Licensing, Economic Regulations, Spectrum Management and Regulatory Litigation. As the Chief Regulatory Officer of Bharti Airtel, Rahul heads the Government Relations, Policy and Regulatory interfaces across the company's Business spanning mobility broadband, DTH, Data Center, Submarine Cables, its international Subsidiaries and all Digital lines of Business.

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar

Director General



Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, a decorated military veteran, retired as Signal Officer in Chief, the head of the ICT wing of the Indian Army, where he was responsible for planning, executing and operating all Telecom and IT networks of the Army. An experienced business leader, prolific speaker and a decorated military veteran with a forward - thinking vision, he is an evangelist for new technology and change -management, with a passion for developing organizations for sustainable growth. He holds a PhD, MTech, two MPhils, and has been a member on the Executive Council of National Board of Accreditation, Jamia Millia Islamia and on the Academic Councils of IGNOU, Veltech and others.

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COAI Members

(In alphabetical order)

CORE MEMBERS



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



The COAI secretariat comprises of the Director General at the helm, with the Deputy Director Generals to support him. There are five departments of teams in the association that ensure that COAI is one of the most credible and reputed industry bodies, solely dedicated towards advancement of the digital communications ecosystem in the country.

The Secretariat has a team strength of 21 people working currently, bringing in talent and skills from various areas of work, such as regulatory, legal, finance, technology, infrastructure and communications/advocacy.

The Team

1. **Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar**, Director General
2. **Mr. Vikram Tiwathia**, Deputy Director General (Technology)
3. **Brigadier S.S. Soin**, Deputy Director General (Regulatory)
4. **Mr. Saurabh Puri**, Associate Director General - Regulatory & Strategy
5. **Mr. Dhananjay Gawanday**, Director – TIC
6. **Mr. Kshem Kapoor**, Director - Technology & Security
7. **Mr. Ashish Mathur**, Assistant Director - Regulatory and Strategy
8. **Mr. Mukesh Kumar**, Senior Advisor – TIC
9. **Mr. Kaustuv Sircar**, Senior Manager – Communications & Public Affairs
10. **Mr. Sunder Singh Poriya**, Senior Manager – Administration
11. **Mr. Jagjeet Singh Sahani**, Senior Manager – Legal
12. **Mr. Suprateek Gulia**, Senior Manager – TIC
13. **Mr. Shiv Kumar Pandey**, Senior Manager – Associate Members
14. **Mr. Deepak Kumar Gupta**, Manager – TIC
15. **Ms. Neetu Sharma**, Manager – Accounts
16. **Mr. Abhijit Panicker**, Manager – Technology & Security
17. **Ms. Ashika V**, Deputy Manager – Data Governance
18. **Mr. Anay Kumar Gupta**, Deputy Manager – Regulatory and Strategy
19. **Mr. Mahavir Singh**, Deputy Manager - Administration
20. **Mr. Dibya Prakash Lahiri**, Assistant Manager – Regulatory and Strategy
21. **Mr. Satyam Mishra**, Assistant Manager – Legal





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