



**COAI** ISSUE  
FEBRUARY 2024

# I-DIGEST

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## LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

### Director General, COAI

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#### From DG's Desk

The Interim Budget 2024, presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister on 1st February 2024, reiterated the Government's commitment to economic growth, improving productivity and creating opportunities with a focus on skilling and re-skilling. The announcement of a corpus of ₹1 lakh crore for the technology sector will provide long term financing with long tenors and low or nil interest rate. It is a positive measure, as access to capital is a critical factor to support innovation and growth. This long-term interest free rate loans and focus on deep tech will further encourage the private sector to scale up research and innovation.

The industry, in its pre-budget submissions, had made various recommendations to the Government towards the benefit and sustainability of the dynamic and crucial telecom sector of the country. While these were not addressed in the interim budget, we are hopeful that in the post-election full budget, the industry's suggestions to reduce regulatory levies like License Fee, deferring USOF contribution till the existing funds are exhausted, exemption of Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on Telecom equipment, waiving of GST on regulatory payments and refund of ITC, among others, will be considered and addressed by the Government during the course of the year..

India is dominating the global debate on whether large OTTs providers or applications should contribute to the building of digital infrastructure that they use to generate large revenue, as was acknowledged by GSMA at the recent Mobile World Congress held in Barcelona. COAI presented the Indian scenario and the industry position on the issue at the global podium, drawing relevant inferences and findings from the White Paper on "Addressing Rising Data Traffic and Infrastructure costs in Indian Telecom" and the additional financial analysis made based on the same, which received due appreciation, and was also covered well by the Indian media as well. .

In another positive development, the establishment of three Semiconductor units under the India Semiconductor Mission emerged as a positive and commendable development for the nation. This is a progressive step for India and the strongly emerging manufacturing ecosystem in the country. Also, the chips from these facilities will benefit various sectors, which provide a fillip to the Digital India mission.

The future of wireless communication will be a dynamic interplay of tech innovation, regulatory adaptation, security vigilance and environmental considerations. The evolution of technologies is playing a pivotal role in revolutionizing wireless communication, addressing the growing demand for bandwidth in densely populated areas. Also, the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning into spectrum management has helped improve network performance. AI contributes significantly to security enhancement by efficiently detecting and responding to threats



and taking actions to safeguard the network. With these trends and technological advancements forthcoming, the industry is also gearing up for an ecosystem which could make optimal and efficient use of all resources, for enhanced outputs. A congenial policy and regulatory environment would be critical to help facilitate the industry in this endeavor, and we hope to be able to work with the Government and the Regulator to enable the same in the country.

In conclusion, as India cements its 5G dominance, the telecom industry buzzes with the anticipation of a transformative wave of use cases. From revolutionizing industries to empowering individuals, 5G promises to be the fuel propelling India towards a digitally empowered future.

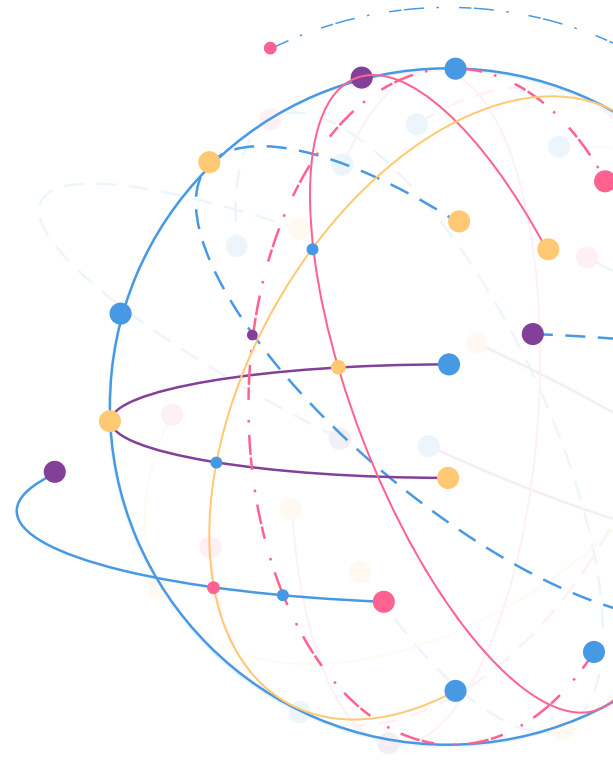
**– LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)**  
Director General, COAI





# COAI

## Latest Updates:



### **TRAI Consultation Paper (CP) on "Assignment of Additional Spectrum to Indian Railways for its Safety and Security Applications"**

TRAI issued the said consultation paper on 07.02.2024 seeking comments of the stakeholders on the issues related to assignment of additional spectrum to Indian Railways, Pricing, Charging and payment methodology for such assignment. Draft response regarding the same is being prepared.

### **Draft Digital India Bill**

The upcoming Digital India Act 2023 is set to replace India's existing Information Technology Act (IT Act) of 2000. MeiTY is currently working in preparing the draft of the Digital India Bill. The same will be released for the stakeholder's consultation soon.

### **Telecommunications Act 2023**

The Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933 are replaced by the Telecommunications Act, the rules of which are under consideration. COAI Committees will be working on the comments to be provided on the rules as prescribed in the Section 56 of the Act.

### **Draft Technical report on "Television Broadcasting to Mobile Handheld Devices - Direct to Mobile (D2M) Broadcasting"**

- This is with reference to the TEC shared updated draft (Version2) "Technical Report on Direct Broadcasting to Mobile Handheld Devices".
- In this regard, COAI submitted its inputs/comments on 01.02.2024 to TEC.

### **Consultation Paper on "Digital Transformation through 5G Ecosystem"**

- This is with reference to the TRAI Consultation Paper on "Digital Transformation through 5G Ecosystem" released on September 29, 2023.
- In this regard, COAI submitted its response to the CP on 05.02.2024.

### **Draft Document for Revision of the "TEC Standard for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna (TEC 13019:2021)"**

- This is with reference to the TEC issued updated Draft document on the Revision of the "TEC Standard for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna (TEC 13019:2021)".
- In this regard, COAI submitted its response on 26.02.2024 to TEC.

### **COAI Meeting with Member (T) held on Feb 15,2024, in DoT, wherein following key issues were discussed.**

- Dealer Possession License (DPL)
- Request for Review of the current Indian EMF Norms and Testing Methodology in line with WHO Recommended ICNIRP 2020 guidelines.
- Requesting Extension in the timelines for Submission of EMF Self certificates
- E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 highlighting the Industry Challenges & requesting to take up the issue with MoF&CC
- Relaxation of restrictive features on M2M SIMs
- Extension of timeline for registration of M2M Service Providers and WPAN/WPLAN Connectivity Providers for M2M Services.
- Adoption and alignment of Indian Telegraph Right of Way rules 2016 (and subsequent amendments)

### **Vision, Strategy & Action Plan for Circular Economy in the Indian Telecom Sector**

- TEC constituted a main committee and a subcommittee on 20.03.2023 in order to study and formulate the draft framework for the Action Plan on Circular Economy.
- A draft Policy Paper & Action Plan on Circular Economy in Telecom Sector was discussed in the sub-committee on 13.04.2023, 02.06.2023, 22.06.2023, 14.07.2023 & 11.08.2023
- Further, the draft Policy Paper & Action Plan on Circular Economy in Telecom Sector was discussed in the main-committee on 29.08.2023, 23.10.2023, 17.11.2024 and 19.01.2024.
- In this regard, based on inputs from members, COAI

submitted its response for the finalization of Vision, Action Plan and Strategy Paper on Circular Economy in Telecom Sector on 23.02.2024

#### **DoT proposed an amendment in PPP-MII order, 2017**

- a. DoT issued an OM seeking comments/suggestions on the proposed amendments in the PPP-MII order, 2017-reg.
- b. COAI submitted a letter to DOT seeking an extension on the same.
- c. DoT has extended the deadline till 12.03.2024 in order to submit the industry response on the proposed Amendment in PPP-MII order, 2017.

#### **MTCTE Applicability for the Virtualized 4G Core Nodes:**

Based on the inputs from members, COAI is seeking a clarity and an extension on the applicability for the Virtualized 4G Core Nodes under MTCTE regime.

#### **TRAI Consultation Paper on Connectivity to Access Service VNOs from more than one NSOs:**

TRAI issued the Consultation Paper on 23.02.2024. The paper will be discussed along with members.

#### **TRAI Recommendations on Introduction of Calling Name Presentation (CNAP) Service in Indian Telecommunication Network**

TRAI issued the Recommendation on 23.02.2024 wherein TSPs are required to provide CNAP to the subscribers upon their request.

#### **Letter to DoT on extension of timeline for the Registration of M2M Service Providers**

We submitted a letter to DoT on 13.02.2024. We requested for extension of timeline for Registration of M2M Service Providers by 180 days from the last date of registration.

#### **5th SBC Meeting of Karnataka State**

The 5th SBC meeting of Karnataka State was held on 27th February 2024, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary, UDD Shri Rakesh Singh, IAS. COAI raised issues like notification of RoW policy aligned with GoI guidelines, pending approvals of RoW permissions with PWD, BBMP, BESC and expediting permission for Forests. Challenges being faced by members with UDD portal, higher permission charges by Municipal corporations of Hubli, Belgaum etc.

#### **COAI Letter to Deputy Chief Minister Karnataka**

A submission was made to Deputy Chief Minister on 13.02.2024 requesting support from his office in taking up the matter with the concerned officials of the State for RoW related matters in the state. A request for in-person meeting to highlight the challenges of our members like coercive actions on aerial fiber, timely permissions etc was also made.

#### **COAI Letter to Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka**

A submission was made to Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Development department, Government of

Karnataka on 15.02.2024 requesting support to the telecom industry on various challenges by taking up the matter with the concerned officials of the State and asking them to desist from taking any coercive actions such as fiber cuts, reasonable timeframe for the TSPs to work on the required conversion from aerial to underground with timely permissions from the relevant authorities.

#### **COAI Letter to Chief Commissioner BBMP, Bengaluru**

A letter was written on 13.02.2024 to Chief Commissioner, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), with regards to the Public Notification issued by BBMP on 4th December, 2023, for self-declaration of all unauthorized underground (UG) and Overhead (OH) cable network for Internet, Telecom and TV cable operators. It was submitted that the needful action has been done by all TSPs and the corporation should now issue RoW permissions on urgent basis.

#### **COAI Letter to Principal Secretary, PWD, Government of Karnataka**

Submission made to Principal Secretary, PWD on 13.02.2024, requesting for issuance of suitable instructions by the PWD department, and keep in abeyance the order No PWD479CRM2023 dated 06.07.2023, and duly process all the pending RoW applications. Critical for the telecom industry to ensure the continued digital growth and development of the progressive State of Karnataka.

#### **COAI letter to Hon'ble Chief Secretary Government of Maharashtra**

A submission was made on 26.02.2024 to the Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra. The letter requested for an in-person industry meeting with Chief Secretary to discuss various ongoing issues and challenges of telecom industry, including non adherence of policy by local authorities, clarification on property Tax etc.

#### **COAI Submission to Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra post 7th SBC**

A submission was made to the on 09.02.2024, to the Chief Secretary, as a formal submission to the points highlighted by COAI during the 7th SBC for consideration and support from his office.

#### **COAI Submission to Chief Secretary, Govt of Kerala post 4th SBC**

A letter was written to Chief Secretary, Govt of Kerala on 09.02.2024, as a formal submission of all the points highlighted by COAI during 4th SBC. It was requested to CS for his kind consideration and support. Major issues included Electricity under Industrial tariff category, high rentals demanded by some Corporations for utilizing poles, Tower constructions in Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)/Wetland areas, SUGAMA Portal enhancement etc.

### **Submission for exemption of OFC laying Projects from FRA, 2006**

A submission was made to Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs on 21.02.2024 to seek his support for exemption of OFC laying Projects from FRA, 2006 certificate.

### **RoW Charges issue at Lucknow Airport**

A submission was made to Secretary (Telecom) on 23.02.2024 to streamline RoW permissions for telecommunications infrastructure at airports and other public places, specifically sharing details about issue related to new terminal T3 of Lucknow airport.

### **State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of J&K**

J&K SBC meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of J&K on 23.02.2024. Industry requested for support regarding alignment to RoW Amendment 2023 and adoption of EB related matters like Green Energy Open Access and Composite Billing.

### **State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of Ladakh**

Ladakh 4th SBC meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Advisor to Hon'ble LG, Ladakh Administration on 20.02.2024. COAI requested support regarding alignment to RoW Amendment 2023 and EB related matters.

### **COAI letter to Chief Secretaries of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana**

Submissions were made to Chief Secretaries of UP and Haryana, for seeking their support and request for an in-person meeting on the challenges being faced by our members for implementation of existing policy of respective state, addressing pending issues and resolving RoW related issues.

### **COAI attended a meeting with TSP/IP members with UP LSA regarding regularization**

A meeting was held by UP LSA on the matter of regularization of the existing telecom tower under One-time Scheme (OTS) in the State.

### **COAI along with TSPs/IPs members attended a meeting with NBM and Gujarat LSA**

On 01.02.2024 an in-person meeting was held by NBM regarding RoW Pendency in the State of Gujarat. All pending issues got discussed and Members were requested to make all RoW application through online

portal only.

### **Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission (GERC) notified Open Access for Green Energy (Renewable Energy) Rules 2024**

The state has notified the amended policy 2024 as aligned with Ministry of Power Electricity Rules (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access) 2022. With this, now 9 states have notified the latest amendment of the Ministry of Power.

### **RoW pendency review meeting by NBM**

COAI along with TSPs/IPs members attended a meeting with NBM regarding RoW Pendency in the States of Punjab, TN, Gujarat.

### **COAI Submission to Punjab LSA**

Submission was made on 15th February 2024 regarding Industry inputs on regularization of unauthorized tower in Chandigarh UT.

### **Meeting with DGDE**

A meeting with ADG (Lands) DGDE took place on 12th February 2024 regarding issues related to right of way. COAI attended along with members and NBM.

### **NBM Meeting**

NBM held a meeting for discussion on "Standard designing of the aesthetics while deployment of 5G small cell on street furniture" on 19th February 2024. COAI participated along with members.

### **NDMC draft RoW policy concerns discussion with NBM**

NBM conducted series of deliberation with the industry on concerns related to the NDMC draft RoW policy. The Mission is trying to mediate and arrive at a common ground for both parties.

### **Meeting with Chairman, Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam**

An industry meeting with the Chairman, UHBVN, senior officials of the DISCOM and LSA was held on 1st March 2024 to discuss various support issues of the industry. The meeting was fruitful as decision on KVA based billing and Composite Billing was taken for immediate implementation.





# COAI

## News Wires:

### **Telcom body COAI seeks manufacturing incentives in AR/VR devices for Metaverse**

Indian telecom operators want to tap the metaverse opportunity with their 5G services. They want to partner with content providers and over-the-top players to enable several use cases.

[Read more](#)



### **Telcos made Rs. 10,000 cr extra capex in 2022-23 to support large apps: COAI**

Telecom operators spent Rs. 10,000 Crore in 2022-23 to support traffic from large apps. COAI estimate the government lost 800 crore in revenue.

[Read more](#)



### **Connectivity for All: Telecom initiatives to bridge the digital divide.**

In the dynamic landscape of India's telecommunication sector, the year 2023 marked a momentous period characterized by transformative initiatives, particularly the nationwide roll-out of 5G.

[Read more](#)



### **Making advancements in interference-free spectrum coexistence**

The future of wireless communication will be a dynamic interplay of tech innovation, regulatory adaptation, security vigilance and environmental considerations.

[Read more](#)



### **Telecom Budget 2024: Industry seeks USOF and tax reliefs, duty exemptions.**

The industry has requested that the Union Budget focuses on reducing the customs duty to zero and gradually increased depending on creating an ecosystem for manufacturing telecom gear in India.

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**Semiconductor units to support India's vision of self-reliance in manufacturing ecosystem: Associations**

Union telecom and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a press briefing that the abovementioned units will generate direct employment of 20,000 advanced technology jobs and about 60,000 indirect jobs.

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**5G is not a white swan, but a white cue ball**

The domino effect of 5G goes far and wide, ultimately helping the overall economy. So do the consequences of not leveraging it right and fast.

[Read more](#)



**Forward March: 2023 serves as a launchpad for greater growth**

The Indian telecom sector witnessed growth and technological advancements in 2023, while the market edged closer to becoming a duopoly.

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**Large OTTs contributing to digital infra creation won't raise costs for end users: GSMA's Gorman**

India is at the forefront of the global debate on whether large video content providers, or apps, should contribute to the building of digital infrastructure that they use to generate large revenue.

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# COAI Events

## Mobile World Congress Barcelona 2024

The MWC is the largest convention in the world for mobile and connectivity developments. It showcases the latest in mobile technology, including phones, laptops, smartwatches, and concept products. The 2024 MWC covered topics such as 5G, AI, 6G, APIs, and immersive technology. Tens of thousands of senior executives from the top global companies, international governments and trailblazing tech businesses converge at MWC Barcelona to make decisions.







# COAI

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## Contact Us

Address : 14, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi – 110 001

Phone : +91 - 11- 23349275 | Fax: +91 - 11 - 23349276

Email : [contact@coai.in](mailto:contact@coai.in) | Website: [www.coai.in](http://www.coai.in)

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