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I-DIGEST

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information that matters

CONTENT

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Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

India's digital leadership aspirations continue to be supported with progressive developments. This month started with the positive and commendable approval of the Union Cabinet on the establishment of three semiconductor units under the India Semiconductor Mission, further paving India's path towards creating a strongly emerging manufacturing ecosystem in the country. The chips produced from these facilities will benefit various sectors which would provide a fillip to the Digital India mission through increased technological power and advancement of the indigenous industrial ecosystem, besides generating employment and attracting more investments in the country.

The Increasing data traffic from LTG's necessitates significant capital development to sustain networks, necessitating that LTGs should contribute to these calls by sharing their revenues. Recent developments depict how one of the LTGs was learnt to remove startups and smaller India-made applications/players from its app store, quoting reasons of non-payment of their quoted charges to these applications, for hosting them. Ironically, these same foreign LTGs vehemently oppose the proposal for a fair-share contribution for the additional costs borne by the TSPs for carrying their disproportionately large traffic and provisioning the increasingly demanding infrastructure required to deliver so. They are ready to evict non-paying small Indian businesses as they expect the "immense value" that their platform provides to the apps, but themselves prefer to enjoy a free-ride over the Indian TSPs' networks, while profiting heavily from them. This also goes against spirit of the Government's 'Make in India' program as well as the progressive approach to foster innovation and encourage smaller organisations, unlike the TSPs' stance to protect startups and MSMEs by not levying a fair-share charge on such smaller players.

The government took a major move towards bolstering cybersecurity by inaugurating the 'Chakshu' facility to help identify and report suspected fraudulent communications. This initiative would help channelize our citizens to come on a single platform led by the government and actively contribute by sharing knowledge to help prevent such undesired and malicious activities. In addition to the app, the government also launched the 'Digital intelligence Platform' that aims to foster coordination among stakeholders to clamp down the misuse of telecom resources in cybercrime and financial frauds.

The COAI has appealed to the government for assistance regarding the escalating instances of telecom equipment theft, emphasizing the impact on the consumers owing to the decline in quality of services or complete loss of services, besides the significant losses to our members. We requested the DoT to write to all States to prioritize such complaints and ensure strict action on the same and also to coordinate with States for Police protection of telecom infrastructure, especially in theft-prone areas. Further, COAI informed the Government of multiple foreign websites
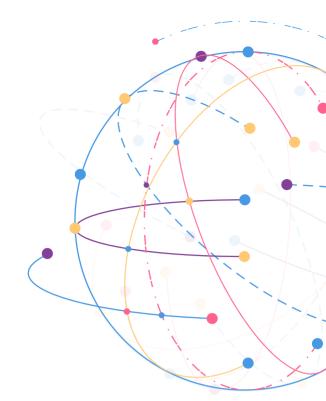
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selling active equipment online, which are suspected to be from the TSPs' networks, requesting for the blocking of such websites.

The Indian telcos require 2 GHz of spectrum in the mid-band to roll out 5G optimally. With only 800 MHz of mid-band spectrum available, there is a mismatch between the quantum of spectrum available to the telcos and the geographical territory that they have to cover with 5G networks. The 6 GHz band can aptly fulfill this deficiency of 1200 MHz of spectrum in the mid-band for IMT purposes. Given that the future 6G would have even higher spectrum requirements, a spectrum pipeline needs to be planned according to the projected demands of the sector.

With steady progress on enabling 6G in India, the policies and the frameworks which are emerging in 5G are the ones that will be carried on to 6G and the focus there will be more on applications and how to monetize them. By being a contributor instead of buyer of technology, the 6G vision will help make India the emerging face of digital technologies globally and fulfill the nation's aspirations to be a leading digital economy.

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

COAI
Latest Updates:

COAI conducted a meeting with Member (S) on March 04,2024, in DoT to discuss the ComSec related issues

A meeting with Member (S), DDG (SA) and NCCS team was held on 04.03.2024 where concerns related to ComSeC testing and certification scheme under MTCTE were deliberated.

TEC granted extension on mandatory implementation of ComSeC Scheme under MTCTE

COAI had sought an extension on ComSec Scheme from 01.04.2024. In this regard, TEC has granted 03 months i.e. from 01.04.2024 to 01.07.2024 extension on mandatory security testing of Wi-Fi CPE and IP Router under ComSec Scheme of MTCTE on 28.03.2024.

COAI requested further extension on 12 products notified under Phases - III and IV of MTCTE

COAI sought extension 6 months extension on 12 products notified under Phase - III and IV of MTCTE from DoT/TEC. In this regard, TEC has granted four months extension on 10 products out of 12 products.

Direct CPE Availability in the Market

COAI has sent a letter to NSCS requesting that the requirement for TSPs to seek approvals from the NSCS for the CPE related products be done away with through appropriate directions.

Draft Digital Competition Bill, 2024

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) on 12.03.2024, released the draft Digital Competition Bill, 2024, for public consultation and the last date to submit the response is 15.04.2024. A note was circulated to members regarding the same and the inputs on the Draft Bill is awaited.

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

COAI had submitted a letter on 21.03.2024 seeking an extension in the timelines for Submission of EMF Self certificates and abeyance of 5G Site testing.

NWP-4C Satellite Issues (MSS & RDSS)) AI 1.13

1. The National Working Party-4C wherein WPC invited stakeholders to provide the input contributions on the WRC-27 Agenda items (1.11 to 1.14).
2. In this regard, COAI submitted its inputs to WPC on AI 1.13 proposal by IAFI.

TRAI Consultation Paper on VNO

We submitted our response to the TRAI Consultation Paper on VNO on 22.03.2024. We submitted that VNOs should not be allowed to parent with multiple NSOs. We submitted our Counter Comments to the TRAI CP on 05.04.2024.

Letter to TRAI on Consumer Complaints

We submitted a letter to TRAI stating the need for effective tracking and automation of complaint handling process.

Letter to DoT on Equipment theft

We submitted a letter to DoT requesting immediate intervention in the rising cases of thefts of telecom equipment. We also submitted a list of websites selling active telecom equipment which are suspected to be stolen from the networks of our member TSPs. Subsequently, a meeting was held in DoT on 05.04.2024 under the Chairmanship of DG(T) to discuss the matter. It was suggested that TSPs should increase surveillance of their towers. DoT would be taking up the matter with the Chief Secretaries of the respective states apart from State Broadband Committee (SBC), TERM Cells of the LSAs for taking up the matter with the State Police and other local bodies.

Letter to DoT on Extension of timeline for Registration of M2M Service Providers

We submitted a letter to DoT on 01.03.2024 seeking extension of timeline for Registration of M2M Service Providers by 180 days. DoT has extended the timelines for Registration by 90 days i.e. till 30.06.2024. We had submitted another letter to DoT on 02.04.2024 DoT to issue

a clarification that telecom resources such as M2M SIMs will continue to be allowed to be provisioned to all existing and new unregistered entities for M2M services until the registration deadline (i.e., 30.06.2024).

Relaxation of Restrictive Features for M2M Connections

We had submitted a letter to DoT on 15.05.2023 requesting the relaxation of such features. DoT has agreed and issued a notification on relaxation of Restrictive features for M2M Connections wherein the no. of predefined IP addresses/ URLs have been increased from four to one hundred.

Update on Maharashtra

1. **Submission made to CEO, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) on** 26.03.2024, regarding disruption in critical telecom connectivity due to negligence of MIDC Contractor. The letter raised issue about the disruption and requested to take action on such errant contractors, emphasizing about utilizing CBuD App.
2. **Submission made to Commissioner Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on** 26.03.2024, on the absence of Telecommunications network coverage in South Mumbai Coastal Road Tunnel. It was requested to BMC to grant Right of Way (RoW) permission to TSPs on an immediate basis in order to lay their network infrastructure in the recently opened leg of the Mumbai Coastal Road Tunnel in the larger Public Interest. It was also requested that consultations with TSPs to be convened before opening/initiating any future phase/s of the South Mumbai Coastal Project, so as to ensure that the requisite telecom network infrastructure/equipment can be deployed well in time, to cater to the public at large with the essential public utility service of telecommunications.

Update on Karnataka

1. **Submission made to Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka on** 18.03. 024 requesting for an in-person meeting to share and discuss Right of Way (RoW) permission related challenges of the industry and support from his office.
2. **Submission made to Principal Secretary, PWD, Karnataka on** 22.03.2024, acknowledging issuance of the 'SoP' for Right of Way (RoW) permission by the department. It was requested for timely permissions and for an in-person meeting to discuss the industry issues in detail.
3. **Submission made to Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka on** 06.03.2024 about industry issues/points highlighted by COAI and discussed during the 5th State Broadband Committee meeting of Karnataka held on 27.02.2024.

Update on Goa

Submission made to Chief Secretary, Govt of Goa on 11.03.2024, post the State Broadband Committee meeting held on 29.02.2024, requesting support to industry for robust telecom infrastructure in the state by highlighting the industry concerns raised during the meeting by COAI.

Update on Tamil Nadu

A letter is submitted to Chief Secretary, Govt of Tamil Nadu on 14.03.2024, raising the member's concern about issuance of Water Tax demand to building owners having mobile towers installed in their premises. It was requested for intervention from his office to suitably instruct the concerned authorities of CMWSSB, Chennai, Madurai and Salem to cease and desist from raising such water tax demand on towers, and not to deploy any coercive steps. The industry also requested an in-person meeting with high office at the earliest convenience to share more details on the matter.

Update on Madhya Pradesh

The 2nd State Broadband Committee meeting of MP state was held on 28.03.2024 chaired by Chief Secretary. COAI submitted industry issues to the LSA which were taken up during the meeting. Industry concerns related to Restoration Charges, additional License fee of Rs.1000 and other important issues were highlighted.

Update on Chhattisgarh

The 5th State Broadband Committee meeting of Chhattisgarh was held on 14.03.2024. The meeting was chaired by Chief Secretary, COAI participated highlighting industry concerns related to RoW policy in the state and sought support related to facilitative steps from state government on Electricity, Common Duct etc.

Update on Delhi

1. **COAI letter to Commissioner (MCD) on Way Leave Charges**
A submission was made on 11.03.2024 to the Commissioner (MCD), requesting to review the recent order from the Corporation wherein the Way Leave Charges were reinstated and immediately withdraw the notification of charging any kind of 'Way Leave' charge for the purpose of Telecom RoW permissions. The Corporation has now withdrawn the charges.

2. **Notification Policy of NDMC**
NDMC has notified the Right of Way policy and has uploaded it on the NDMC website. There have been no changes from the draft version circulated by the NDMC earlier. Major industry concern continues to be of high charges related to regularization of towers.

Update on Himachal Pradesh

COAI letter to Chief Secretary, HP on HPROW-23 alignment
A submission was made on 11.03.2024 to the CS, HP, requesting GoHP for complete alignment of HPROW-23 policy with the Central Right of Way Rules.

Update on Jammu & Kashmir

Submission made to Chief Secretary, J&K post State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting. COAI made submission on 14.03.2024 to Chief Secretary (J&K) post the SBC, reiterating the industry points highlighted during the meeting held on 23rd February 2024.

Update on Haryana

1. **Meeting held with the Chairman, Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (UHBVN) on Green Energy Open Access & Composite Billing**

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Shri P K Das (Chairman, UHBVN) along with Nigam's Senior officials and Haryana LSA on 01.03.2024 to discuss Implementation of Composite Billing and Green Energy Open Access Rules, 2023 in the State of Haryana. A formal submission was made by COAI to the DISCOM, capturing the main points discussed during the meeting.

2. **COAI letter to Chief Secretary, Haryana on CCIP-23 alignment**

A submission was made on 28.03.2024 to the CS, Haryana, requesting for complete alignment of the state Right of Way policy, CCIP-23 with the amended Right of Way Rules, 2016.

Update on Punjab

COAI letter to Chief Secretary, Punjab on policy alignment

A submission was made on 14th March 2024 to the CS, Punjab, requesting for amendment in Punjab Telecom Guidelines-2020 for charging lease rentals on yearly basis rather than the current rule of 20 years.

Update on Gujarat

State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting - Gujarat 4th SBC meeting of the FY 2023-24 was held on 20.03.2024 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Gujarat. Discussions took place regarding industry issue, including Gujarat state RoW policy alignment with amended RoW Rules 2016

Update on Uttar Pradesh

State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting
UP SBC meeting was held 20.03.2024 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, UP. The discussions took place regarding industry issues and Electricity related support.

Update on Assam

8th SBC of Assam was held on 04.03.2024 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of the state. All industry concerns were highlighted by LSA and COAI during the meeting.

Update on Mizoram

The 6th SBC of Mizoram was held on 06.03.2024 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of the state. All industry concerns were highlighted by COAI during the meeting.

Submission to Chairperson(s) of respective State Electricity Regulatory Commissions

request implementation of The Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules 2023. These amendments enables aggregation of load to achieve 100 kW, making the consumer eligible to avail Green Energy through Open Access route. These repeat submissions were made to Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, HP and UP.

Meeting held with the DDG Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG)

A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Shri D K Ohja (DDG, MoPNG) along with National Broadband Mission (NBM) officials on 21.03.2024 to discuss RoW related issues for policy alignment and exorbitant crossing charges.

Northeast Investors Summit

COAI attended the **Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER) and FICCI co organised investment summit** initiation session scheduled at Vigyan Bhawan on 06.03.2024.

Field Visit- National Highway Logistics Management Limited (NHLML)

COAI attended the National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) organised field visit along with members at the behest of NBM to see the ducts and fibre laid along the Delhi Mumbai expressway on 13.03.2024.

EMF Awareness

Delhi LSA along with COAI organised an **EMF Awareness event at the office of the Registrar General of India** on 15.03.2024.

COAI
News Wires:

Fair Share: Telcos to seek govt. intervention; get GSMA support

Telecom operators said that the increasing data traffic from OTTs necessitates significant capital investments to sustain telecom networks, suggesting that OTTs should contribute to these costs by sharing their revenues.
Read more

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

In an interview, DG COAI discusses the importance of 6 GHz airwaves for effective expansion 5G in india, spectrum pipeline for future networks, and the role of technology agnostic connectivity.
Read more

The debate over private networks in India: A nuanced review

The flavour of 5G private networks depends entirely on the environment, geography and availability of public networks in the vicinity of the facility.
Read more

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

This is a progressive step for India and the strongly emerging manufacturing ecosystem in the country, said DG COAI.
Read more

Government unveils 'Chakshu' initiative to combat frauds through spam calls, messages

Chakshu provides citizens with a platform to flag suspicious communication received via calls, SMS, or WhatsApp messages aimed at defrauding individuals.
Read more

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News Wires:

Delisting of homegrowns apps, players from app store against 'Make in India' spirit: COAI

"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 app.

Read more

DoT abolishes wireless operating licenses for ease of doing business

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) abolished wireless operating licenses for establishing and maintaining telecommunications, paving the way for a simplified regulatory regime and would also enable faster rollout of networks.

Read more

Involve more participants at the India Mobile Congress 2024: Vaishnaw

Communications and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Monday that at least 1,000 exhibitors should participate in the upcoming IMC 2024.

Read more

Telcos to DoT: Facing Financial losses due to widespread theft of active telecom gear

In a letter to DoT Secretary, COAI said that incidents of theft of telcos active equipment have increased multifold from October 2023.

Read more

DoT's technical arm has new draft on D2M tech standards in final stages: Report

D2M technology will allow beaming of live TV content directly to mobile phones without a cellular data connection.

Read more

COAI Events

7th edition of ET Telecom 5G|6G Congress

Date: 14th March 2024

ETTelecom, a specialised vertical of the Economic Times conducted 'The 5G | 6G Congress 2024' bringing together industry leaders and policymakers to deliberate on the 5G, 5G Advanced and 6G roadmap including current regulatory and policy decisions with the device ecosystem. The 5G | 6G Congress was a conference centered on the most recent developments and conversations surrounding 5G and upcoming 6G technology. It's a platform where professionals congregated to exchange knowledge and ideas about the telecom sector, particularly concerning 5G and possible 6G developments in the future.

COAI

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