



**COAI**

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# I-DIGEST

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

### Director General, COAI

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#### From DG's Desk

COAI has reiterated the importance of maintaining a fair, consultative, and non-arbitrary licensing and infrastructure deployment regime, especially as India stands on the brink of its next digital revolution powered by 5G and AI integration.

Clarity on Spectrum policy remains elusive, particularly regarding the 6 GHz band. While the GSMA has urged the DoT to include the 6 GHz band in the upcoming spectrum auctions to meet the growing data needs of 5G and future technologies, COAI supports the need for transparency and predictability in spectrum allocation. Ambiguity around such critical assets could hinder network planning, investment decisions and innovation, ultimately affecting India's digital growth trajectory.

Moreover, the issue of OTT communication platforms evading regulatory oversight continues to be a pressing concern. While TSPs are stringently governed under frameworks like the TCCPR 2018 to curb spam and ensure consumer protection, OTT communication apps — offering similar or substitutable services — operate outside the ambit of equivalent regulation. As spam, fraud calls and misleading messages now proliferate over OTT networks, COAI has urged that these platforms be brought under the same cybersecurity and regulatory framework as TSPs. This would enforce a principle of “Same Service, Same Rules” and close the glaring regulatory gap that compromises consumer security and trust. In this regard, COAI also welcomed TRAI's recent recognition of spam issues originating from OTT platforms.

At a time when India is poised to unlock vast digital opportunities through AI, 5G and smart infrastructure, regulatory convergence, policy certainty and infrastructure-friendly practices are not optional — they are essential. The telecom sector must not be burdened with unilateral, anti-competitive policies, nor should it be left to operate within outdated frameworks while new-age digital platforms flourish without checks.

India's telecom industry witnessed several other regulatory and technological developments over the past month, reflecting a strong push towards transparency, security and self-reliance. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) took firm steps against fraud and illegal activities in the sector, disconnecting over 3.4 crore mobile numbers through the Sanchar Saathi initiative and launching its mobile app for easier citizen access to verification and complaint services. TRAI also advanced consumer protection through inter-regulatory collaboration, convening the Joint Committee of Regulators (JCoR) to address digital fraud and harmonize regulations across sectors.

On the technology front, the industry marked a major milestone in indigenous innovation with the launch of a government-backed initiative to develop open-source platforms for 5G-A and 6G networks, a move aligned with



India's ambition of self-reliance in critical technologies. DoT also directed telecom operators to disclose all Chinese-made equipment in their networks, signaling heightened focus on national security. Meanwhile, the rapid rise of 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) users reaching 5.7 million in January, led TRAI to reclassify these connections under wireless services, underscoring their commercial significance.

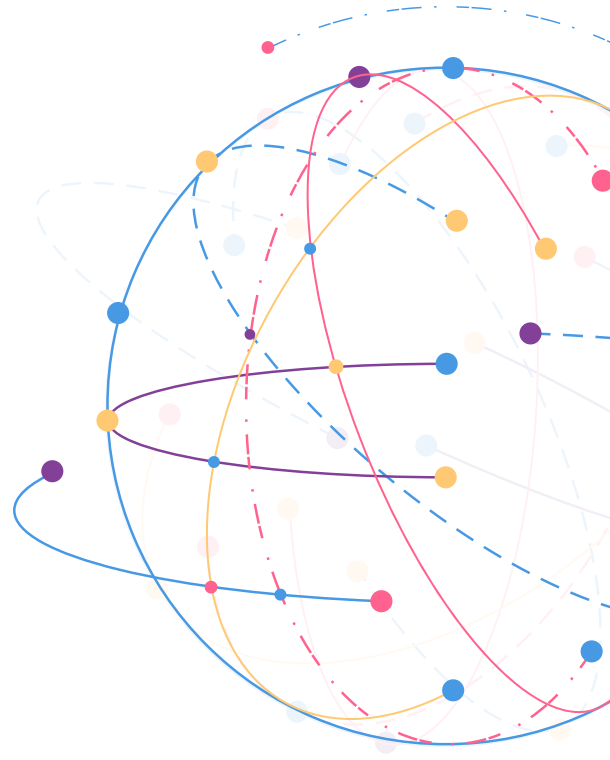
We feel that India's policymakers must continue to uphold the spirit of equitable regulation and long-term investment security. This is not only vital for consumer protection and service quality but also for sustaining the country's vision of a digitally inclusive and globally competitive economy.

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



# COAI

## Latest Updates:



### **Letter to TRAI on Interconnection issues**

We submitted a letter to TRAI on 02.04.2025 highlighting various concerns with BSNL on interconnection matter.

### **Pre CP on Review of existing TRAI Regulations on Interconnection matters**

As an outcome of our letter on interconnection issues dated 02.04.2025, TRAI issued Pre Consultation paper on 03.04.2025. We submitted our response on 23.04.2025.

### **Draft TRAI Telecommunication Tariff (71st Amendment) Order, 2025 - PM-WANI**

We submitted additional comments to TRAI on 15.04.2025. (a) We opposed the support for PM WANI through tariff caps arguing this unfairly burdens private players and distorts the market. (b) Regulated backhaul connectivity tariffs would misuse regulations for competitive advantage. (c) Tariff caps would reduce TSPs' ability to invest in network expansion and maintenance, especially in low-ARPU and rural areas. (d) Additionally, PM-WANI PDOs rely on existing TSP network infrastructure.

### **Letter to DoT regarding funds Allocation to R&D from the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)**

We submitted a letter to DoT on 29.04.2025 requesting: (a) DBN contributions are used exclusively for projects that demonstrably enhance telecommunications and broadband coverage in rural and remote areas; (b) Efforts should be made to ensure more inclusive approach to R&D funding by including all eligible, Technical, R&D and engineering institutions; (c) The selection of implementing agencies for R&D funding must adhere to the process as per the Digital Bharat Nidhi Rules, 2024; (d) Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and products developed using DBN-funded R&D must be made accessible to contributing TSPs/ISPs in a transparent manner.

### **Meeting with Member (GST, CX, ST):**

An industry Meeting was called by Member (GST, CX, ST), CBIC to discuss the various issues pertaining to GST in the

Telecom Sector. Highlighted the issues pertaining to ITC Accumulation, Input Service Distributor and Invoice Management System (IMS). Member (GST, CX, ST) gave positive feedback and stated that these issues will be taken up by MoF.

### **Meeting with Customs Department:**

A meeting was held with Director (Customs) in MoF to discuss issues pertaining to Rate of Basic Custom Duty (BCD) on Telecom Equipment and Vessels used for laying of Submarine Cables. Regarding the issue of Rate of BCD on Telecom Equipment MoF stated that it is actively engaging with DoT for considering the rates presently being levied on the equipment being imported.

### **Migration of Bharatkosh to RBI's ekuber version 2.0:**

DoT vide its letter F No. 36-2/2022/LFA/SARAS has notified that Bharatkosh has migrated to ekuber version 2.0. This migration has enabled a Challan Payment Identification Number (CPIN) which is generated for NEFT/RTGS mode of payments. As a result, ekuber version 1.0 has been discontinued and entities have to operate through ekuber version 2.0.

### **Review of All Industry Rates of Duty Drawback:**

Duty Drawback Division under Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has sought data relating to inputs (including packing materials) used in the manufacture of the relevant export products in the format prescribed. The last date for submission of comments was 30.04.2025.

### **Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2025:**

This is with reference to the TCCCP (Amendment) Regulation 2025 issued by TRAI on 12.02.2025. COAI submitted a letter to TRAI on 22.04.2025 highlighting critical points and timelines w.r.t the said amendments.

### **Adoption of Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business**

## **Communication:**

COAI letter submitted to DoCA on 30.04.2025 regarding adoption of Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communication.

### **Submission made to Mission Director, National Broadband Mission (NBM) on Erroneous Charging Practices by Civic Agencies in the State of Rajasthan:**

A letter was submitted to DDG NBM on 15.04.2025 requesting for support by arranging issuance of suitable directions for (i) Levy charges for pole usage on a per pole basis and not based on the number of cables deployed by a single operator on the same pole and (ii) Categorize passive devices such as splitters appropriately and the charges applicable to active devices should not be levied on such passive infrastructure components.

### **Submission made to Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh:**

A letter was submitted to Chief Secretary, Chhattisgarh on 11.04.2025, requesting urgent support to the industry on (i) Telecom infrastructure deployment in areas under Private Entity Property, (ii) Work Disruptions on mobile tower sites, and (iii) Lack of Support from Local Administration and Law Enforcement Agencies, apart from other RoW related issues.

### **Submission to Principal Secretary, Urban Development, Government of Maharashtra:**

A letter was submitted to Principal Secretary, UD-2, Maharashtra on 07.04.2024 to emphasize the necessity of regularizing the existing communication towers across Maharashtra and therefore requested to open the window of the online portal for the regularization of existing mobile communication towers at the earliest.

### **Submission made to Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan post the State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting:**

A submission post the 13th SBC of Rajasthan was made on 03.04.2025, reiterating the RoW related issues taken up during this SBC with Chief Secretary. Main issues were related to effective working of state RoW Portal, Uniform rates by PWD and RIICO, Safety and Security of Network equipment, as theft incidents were happening, and other important issues.

### **Submission to Secretary (T) regarding Industry concern on the use of Jammers by Jail Authorities:**

A submission was made to Secretary (T) on 28.04.2025 raising concerns about the installation of jammers by prison authorities in several states – notably Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Punjab, without adhering to the jammer guidelines issued by the Cabinet Secretariat which resulted in significant degradation in the quality of telecom services.

### **5th State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of Puducherry**

5th SBC of Puducherry was chaired by Chief Secretary, Govt of Puducherry on 30.04.2025. Important industry issues were raised, for e.g. resistance from Local Cable Operators, industry request for extension of time for auto rejection (from 9 days to 30 days), Permission for HDD, Regularization of Towers, Support for timely Electricity meter Reading and error free online payments of Electricity bills

### **Daman and Diu & Dadra Nagar Haveli (DD & DNH) Union Territory (UT) Broadband Committee meeting**

DD & DNH UT Broadband Committee meeting was held on 28.03.2025 chaired by UT Administration. Immediate adoption of RoW Rules 2024 in the UT was highlighted during the meeting.

### **Meeting on RoW and Portal related issues**

The 2nd round of industry meeting with States on RoW and portal related issues, was held on 08.04.2025 chaired by Administrator (DBN), DoT. Each State shared their status on the portal functionality during the meeting.

### **Submission to Chief Secretaries for Notification of Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2024:**

Submission were made to Chief Secretary of Bihar, Jharkhand and Punjab during the month for expeditious notification of Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2024.

### **Submission on Central Electricity Authority (CEA) draft regulation on Installation and Operations of Meters:**

A submission was made to Chief Engineer (Legal) on 03.04.2025, on the draft amendment to the Metering regulation titled "Central Electricity Authority (Installation and Operation of Meters) (5th Amendment) Regulations, 2025".

### **Submission made to State Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) for Green Energy Open Access (GEOA) facilitation:**

Submission were made to Secretary (ERC) to define the GEOA charges for Low Tension (LT) consumers, states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh during the month.

### **Response on the reply from Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) on DISCOM pole charges**

COAI reply was submitted to Chairman (DERC) on 25.04.2025, to seek support from the Hon'ble Commission to issue necessary directions to all the DISCOMs, adhering to the charges with regard to installation of telecommunication line or equipment on their pole/s, as per the RoW Rules, 2024.

### **State Broadband Committee (SBC) Meeting of Uttar Pradesh**

The SBC Meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary on 11.04.2025. Various RoW issues of the industry were highlighted and discussed, including, Implementation of UPROW Rules by Local Bodies, High

Restoration Charges etc.

#### **Delhi state Circle Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting:**

Delhi CCC meeting was conducted on 15.04.2025 with selection of the new Chair, Vice-chair and Conveners. Discussion on various RoW issues in Delhi NCR were discussed in detail.

#### **Migration of Gati Shakti Sanchar (RoW) Portal to Unified Portal for RoW Applications**

A demo was conducted on 09.04.2025 by NBM, as DoT has decided to consolidate all its major portals into the new Unified Portal, 'Telecom eServices Portal'.

#### **Implementation of Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2024**

A total of 25 States/UTs have issued notification about the state's readiness for implementation of RoW Rules 2024. Bihar and Haryana have notified during April month.

#### **State Broadband Committee (SBC) Meeting of Mizoram**

The 7th SBC meeting of Mizoram was conducted on 08.04.2025, chaired by the Chief Secretary of the state. COAI requested the state for adoption of the RoW Rules 2024 in letter and spirit by the state and all local bodies.

#### **Mumbai LSA and industry meeting on Mumbai Metro connectivity**

A meeting was held on 24.04.2025 by the Mumbai LSA, regarding the issue raised by the industry of non-discriminatory allowance of telecom infrastructure

deployment by Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL).

#### **Manipur RoW Portal Demonstration**

Manipur state IT department conducted a demonstration of the updated RoW portal of the state aligned with the RoW rules 2024, on 22.04.2025. The demonstration was attended by industry representatives.

#### **"COAI submitted its response on the Bureau of Indian Standards BIS CED 46 (26914) WC draft document**

The industry response on the BIS draft document on National Building Code of India Part 8 Building Services Section 6 Information and Communication Enabled Installations was submitted on 22.04.2025.

#### **Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) Response to COAI letter**

Assam State Disaster Management Authority responded to the COAI letter on 08.04.2025, wherein the authority agreed to the industry request of expediting power connectivity and fuel procurement during disasters in the state. The industry has sought reprieve from the CoW inventory mandate and other support required by the industry during disasters.

#### **Delhi LSA meeting**

Delhi LSA conducted a meeting with COAI on 29.04.2024, regarding the issue of non-alignment of pole charges with the RoW Policy 2024 by the state's DISCOMs.

### **Include 6GHz in next spectrum auction**

India should include the 6GHz band in the next spectrum auction.

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### **Telcos oppose vendor model for metro 3 mobile network deployment**

Telcos and COAI have raised concerns over the MMRCL's decision to use a vendor led model for deploying mobile network infrastructure on the upcoming metro line 3.

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### **COAI welcomes TRAI's call to address spam on OTT**

DG COAI said the action by MeitY, apparently recognises the trend of the nuisance of Spam and Scam calls increasingly shifting to the OTT platforms, especially with the robust measures being undertaken for Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC) by DoT along with the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) over the telecom networks.

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### **Telcos warn of Network rollout delays as states lag on infra rules**

Users could face service quality issues as Telecom Operators struggle to expand network with about 13 states yet to align with Centre's updated RoW Rules.

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