



COAI

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LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

October 2025 marked a defining moment for India's telecommunications sector as the India Mobile Congress 2025 brought together over 1.5 lakh visitors, showcasing 1,600 cutting-edge use cases demonstrating how telecommunications has evolved from a standalone vertical into a foundational enabler of India's economic growth and social transformation. In his inaugural address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's journey from being a technology consumer to emerging as a global digital leader, setting the vision for our industry's role in realizing India's aspiration of becoming a developed nation by 2047. COAI's active participation throughout IMC 2025 reflected our commitment to addressing the sector's most pressing challenges.

Critical challenges were also brought into sharp focus during the month. The widening gap between network capital expenditure and revenue, now exceeding ₹10,000 crore, signals a structural imbalance threatening the industry's ability to sustain quality infrastructure investment. COAI has been vocal about spectrum pricing reforms that reflects telecommunications' new role as a 'value-added horizontal' – an essential foundational infrastructure rather than a mere vertical. TRA's consultation for the next spectrum auction covering 10 bands, including upper 6 GHz spectrum, presents an opportunity to reimagine pricing methodologies balancing government revenue with industry sustainability.

The regulatory asymmetry between licensed telecom operators and emerging platforms demands urgent attention. COAI's consistent position remains that similar services must operate under similar rules to ensure fair competition and security standards. As OTT messaging service platforms carry increasing network traffic, establishing regulatory parity becomes essential for national security and consumer protection. Current gaps create security vulnerabilities and place disproportionate financial burden on licensed operators complying with comprehensive requirements while competing with platforms facing minimal obligations.

On the ongoing debate over satellite spectrum pricing, the DoT's consideration of 5% usage fee, highlights the inherent complexity of encouraging investment in complementary technologies while maintaining level playing fields. COAI's position remains consistent: satellite communication should serve as a complement to terrestrial networks, particularly for rural and remote areas, but offering comparable urban services requires consistent regulatory treatment.

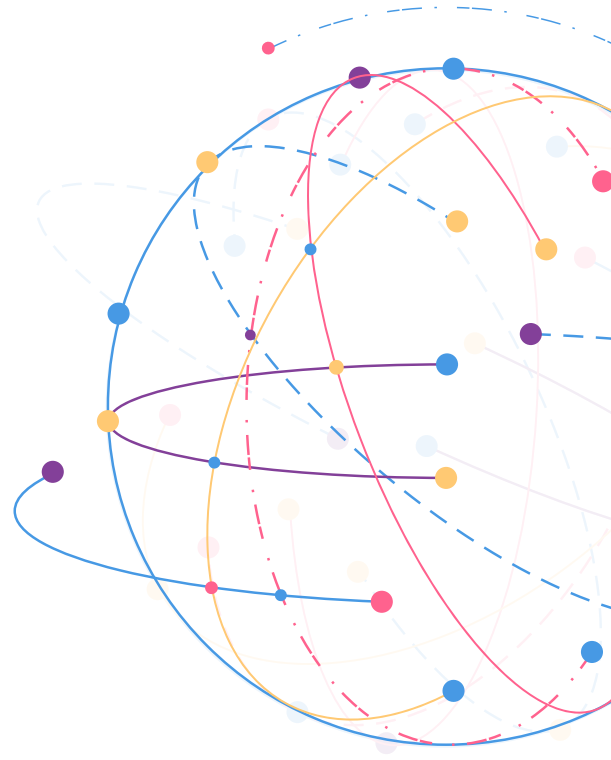
The month also reflected the tremendous progress achieved and critical policy decisions that lie ahead for the Indian telecommunication sector. Realizing the full potential of telecommunications requires a regulatory evolution recognizing its transformed character – from vertical service to horizontal infrastructure. Equally important are policy frameworks that safeguard the industry's financial health, enabling sustained investment in networks and innovations that will define India's digital future.

COAI remains committed to constructive engagement with all stakeholders, ensuring telecommunications continues connecting, empowering and transforming lives across our nation.



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Latest Updates:



Income Tax Act, 2025

Inputs to upcoming Forms and Rules for the Income Tax Act, 2025 were submitted on 13.10.2025. In its submission, COAI requested for digitization of Tax Residency of Certificate for Ease of Doing Business, revision of inter-quartile ranges for calculation of Arm's Length Price.

Pre-Budget Recommendations to Government

COAI has submitted its Pre-Budget recommendations to the Ministry of Finance on 27 October 2025, seeking consideration on key industry priorities, including reduction of compliance burden for customs-related processes, rationalisation of regulatory levies, and a permanent exemption from Basic Customs Duty on submarine cables, among other measures.

COAI – NITI Aayog Consultation for Viksit Bharat @2047 on Telecom Sector Issues

COAI was invited by NITI Aayog to identify key sectoral challenges and actionable recommendations to accelerate India's progress towards Viksit Bharat @2047.

COAI submitted a report in October 2025. Among several issues, COAI emphasized the need for clarity under the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, particularly regarding verifiable parental consent for processing children's data. The existing blanket age-verification requirement was highlighted as disproportionate and operationally impractical, while restricting consent solely to "parents" excludes legal guardians and institutions recognized under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. COAI recommended that consent obligations arise only when a user self-declares as under 18, that the term "parent" be broadened to include "legal guardian", and that self-declaration suffice instead of document-based verification—ensuring inclusivity, operational feasibility, and alignment with existing child welfare laws.

MIB Draft Guidelines on Standards for Accessibility of Content on OTT Platforms

COAI has sought an extension from Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to respond to the Draft Guidelines for Accessibility of Content on OTT Platforms, which aim to promote digital inclusivity for persons with hearing and visual impairments in line with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the UNCRPD and the

Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan). While the initiative aligns with the goal of equitable access to entertainment and information, COAI is assessing potential technical and operational challenges for members functioning as intermediaries and publishers of online curated content. A detailed response/submission is currently under progress.

MEITY's Draft Guidelines on AI-Synthetic and Altered Content

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has released draft guidelines on synthetic and altered content, introducing new obligations for intermediaries and platforms managing AI-generated media. Recognizing significant compliance implications for the telecom and digital ecosystem, COAI has requested an extension and is organizing an industry consultation to evaluate the operational and legal impact of the proposed framework and develop harmonized regulatory recommendations.

Consultation Paper on the Auction of Radio Frequency Spectrum in the Frequency Bands Identified for IMT

1. TRAI had released Consultation paper on the Auction of Radio Frequency Spectrum in the Frequency Bands Identified for IMT on 30 September 2025.

2. COAI submitted an extension request to TRAI on 15.10.2025. to respond to the CP

3. In this regard, TRAI issued an extension notice of one week i.e. till 04.11.2025 from the current deadline.

COAI Letter – Published Draft Rules by DoT – Review Process for Public Consultation

1. With regards to draft rules pertaining to Telecom Act 2023, published by DoT, COAI submitted a letter to MoC on 27.09.2025 requesting DoT to adopt a consultative and transparent process, as followed in other leading economies."

COAI Clause wise Response to DoT draft Telecommunication (User Identification) Rules 2025

1. DoT issued Draft Telecommunication (User Identification) Rules 2025 on 19.09.2025. COAI submitted its response on 23.10.2025.

COAI Letter– Challenges concerning user validation

after changes in Aadhaar information/ credentials

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 17.10.2025 highlighting various challenges faced concerning user validation after changes in Aadhaar information/ credentials

6th State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of Tamil Nadu

6th SBC meeting of Tamil Nadu was organised on 16.10.2025, chaired by the Chief Secretary. Important industry issues like pending issuance of Administrative Order of Right of Way (RoW) Rules 2024, GST Charging issues, Regularization of Towers, Common Duct, Common Rates for Restoration etc. were discussed during this meeting. A formal submission on the highlighted industry concerns was also made on 27.10.2025.

Pre-Meeting with members for State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting of Rajasthan

Rajasthan LSA had conveyed the scheduling of 15th SBC meeting on 04.11. 2025. Issues compiled from members were deliberated during the internal meeting with members of Rajasthan on 29.10.2025 and discussed the approach for a fruitful outcome.

Congratulatory DO's to New Chief Secretary in various States

Congratulatory DOs were written to newly appointed Chief Secretaries of Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Meghalaya in the month of October, welcoming and briefly introducing Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) to the appointees.

Letter to Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission

A Letter was submitted to Hon'ble Chairman, Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission on 15.10.2025, requesting to make the Green Energy Open Access (GEOA) framework more inclusive, practical and aligned with the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2023, of the Ministry of Power. Alignment with the Ministry of Power amendment on GEOA will facilitate the Telecom industry in adoption of renewable energy across the State.

Letter to Managing Director, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRCL)

A submission was made to the Managing Director, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRCL) on 27.10.2025, requesting her intervention to ensure that the rights to install Telecom infrastructure in the Mumbai Metro are extended to all duly licensed Telecom Service Providers in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.

Chandigarh Administration notification on Clauses related to Restoration and Penalty

The Department of Information Technology, Chandigarh Administration, on 26.09.2025, notified clauses related to restoration and penalty charges for OFC laying.

Onboarding of Bihar State Departments on e-Services Portal

All departments of Bihar State Government, have been onboarded on the e-Services portal, this was informed by the National Broadband Mission on 07.10.2025. Further, Members have confirmed that all departments are live and no issues are being faced.

Jammu & Kashmir UT Broadband Committee meeting

The 9th UT Broadband Committee meeting of Jammu & Kashmir was held on 14.09.2025 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. COAI reiterated the industry's request for support in providing electricity at industrial

tariff. A formal submission in this regard was also made on 28.10.2025.

Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2025

The Ministry of Power issued the Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2025, on 09.10.2025, to strengthen and reform the electricity sector. Inputs/suggestions have been sought within 30 days from the date of notification and the same has been circulated to members for their inputs.

National Broadband Mission (NBM) issued Clarification on Private Property

NBM issued a clarification on 17.10.2025 to all States/UTs regarding the "Establishment of Telecommunication Network in Property other than Public Property". This clarification of asking all additional information through 'online mode' is expected to facilitate smoother industry operations.

Punjab Administrative Order on RoW Rules, 2024

The Government of Punjab issued an Administrative Order dated 17.10.2025 for the adoption of the Right of Way (RoW) Rules in accordance with the Central RoW Rules, 2024, under the Indian Telecommunication Act, 2023.

Submission to DoT for supporting alignment by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

A submission was made to DoT (NBM) on 23.10.2025 regarding support for alignment of RoW charges levied by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Meeting with Northern Railway

An online meeting was held on 24.10.2025 by NBM with officials of Northern Railway and industry to discuss the possible telecom industry's requirements in the proposed 3rd Railway line project from Jalandhar Cantt to Jammu.

Letters to State Electricity Regulatory Commissions

Letters to Hon'ble Chairman(s) of Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim Electricity Regulatory Commission were written in the month of October, requesting Industrial Tariff for the telecom Industry in the states.

COAI submission of comments on Draft Telecommunications (Authorisation for Provision of Main Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2025

COAI submitted its response highlighting the need for a transparent, investment-friendly, and simplified framework under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. Key recommendations include publishing a compendium of all final draft rules with an explanatory note, retaining the contractual nature of authorisations, ensuring voluntary migration, rationalising the authorisation fee to 1% and reducing compliance burdens. These measures will promote regulatory certainty, encourage investments, and support the Government's vision of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) and digital growth in the telecom sector.

COAI submission of comments on Draft Telecommunications (Migration) Rules, 2025

COAI submitted its response highlighting that the migration to the new authorization regime must remain a voluntary choice for the existing licensees. COAI also requested for deletion of the broad "pending dues" definition to facilitate a smooth transition. Additionally, for greater clarity, a consolidated compendium of all final rules and the inclusion of a deemed approval provision, has been sought.



COAI News Wires:

COAI's Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar In Conversation
with Tech360 at IMC 2025.

[NDTV](#)



Telcos seek uniform rules for satcom,
OTT platforms.

[The Financial Express](#)



Can India Keep Mobile Internet Cost This Cheap?
COAI DG on What's Next for Tariffs.

[Money Control](#)



Design, develop, deploy: Indias end-to-end
strategy for leading the next wave of digital
infrastructure

[Fortune India](#)



Telcos get time till December 31 for 5G
EMF exposure self-certification.

[PTI: The Economic Times](#)





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