



**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

April has been a landmark month for the telecom sector, with the successful convening of the COAI DigiCom Summit 2026, under the theme, "India's Techade: Accelerating and Shaping the Digital Future". The event brought together policymakers, regulators and industry leaders to deliberate on the next phase of India's digital journey. The Summit served as a critical platform to align perspectives on emerging technologies, policy priorities, and the evolving role of telecom as the backbone of a rapidly digitising economy.

A key highlight of the Summit was the participation of senior government leadership and regulators. Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, emphasized the need for design-led innovation and a stronger industry role in shaping India's 6G ambitions, urging stakeholders to actively contribute to global standards and R&D ecosystems. Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI, underscored the importance of efficient spectrum utilization, improved indoor connectivity and policy frameworks that enable wider broadband adoption through hybrid models.

From the industry perspective, COAI reiterated the importance of building AI-driven, secure and resilient telecom networks, noting that the convergence of AI, 5G and future 6G technologies will define India's digital competitiveness. At the same time, COAI also highlighted the urgent need to strengthen frameworks to combat spam and digital fraud, ensuring that consumer trust remains central to the sector's growth.

Discussions across the Summit reflected a clear consensus on several key themes, including rational and affordable spectrum pricing, accelerating AI integration into network operations, addressing the growing complexity of telecom fraud, and ensuring that policy and regulatory approaches evolve in line with technological advancements. The need for sustained investment in R&D and a collaborative ecosystem between government, industry and academia emerged as a recurring priority.

The Summit also featured four focused panel discussions, each addressing a critical dimension of the telecom ecosystem, including "Building Intelligent, Resilient and Scalable Networks"; "Tackling Spam and Digital Frauds through Shared Ecosystem Policy and Regulatory Aspects"; "Shaping the Next Generation of Connectivity"; and "Strengthening India's Digital Infrastructure Value Chain".

Beyond the Summit, April also saw important industry developments shaping the broader discourse. Ongoing conversations around spectrum pricing ahead of upcoming auctions highlighted the need for a balanced approach that ensures affordability while enabling continued network investments. At the same time, regulatory focus on spam control measures and SIM-binding frameworks reflects a growing emphasis on safeguarding consumers in an increasingly digital ecosystem.

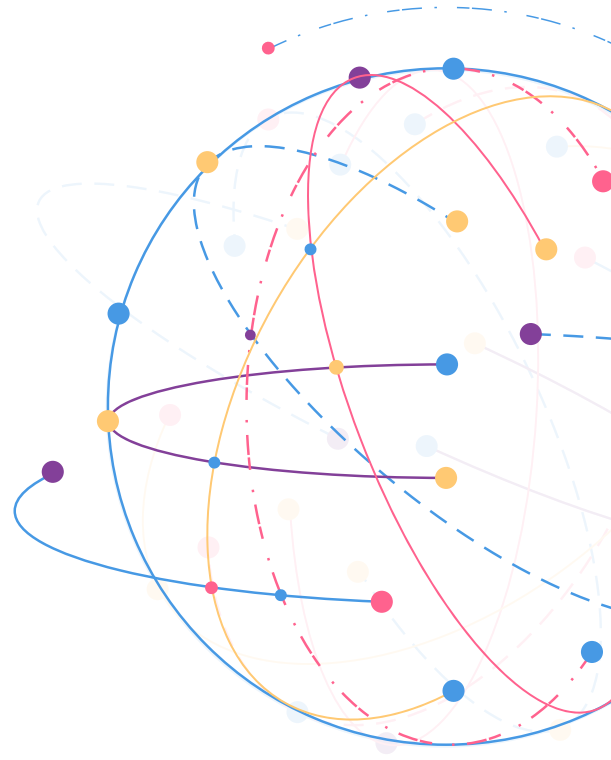
During the month, COAI also contributed to the wider strategic discourse on digital infrastructure and geopolitical resilience through an op-ed on the emerging "Digital Fault Lines in West Asia". The article highlighted how recent geopolitical developments in the region have underscored the vulnerabilities of critical digital and telecom infrastructure, including undersea cables, data routes, satellite systems, cloud infrastructure and communication networks. It emphasized that in an era where digital connectivity is deeply intertwined with national security, economic continuity and strategic autonomy, countries like India must adopt a more resilient, diversified and security-oriented approach to digital infrastructure planning.

As we move forward, the outcomes of the DigiCom Summit reinforce a clear direction: India's telecom sector must continue to evolve as a secure, intelligent and innovation-led digital foundation. COAI remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders to enable policies and partnerships that will drive the next phase of India's growth story in the digital era.



# COAI

## Latest Updates:



### REGULATORY COMMITTEE

● TRAI issued a Consultation Paper on Review of Tariffs for Domestic Leased Circuits on 23 January 2026. COAI submitted its response on 2 March 2026, advocating for continued tariff forbearance in the DLC segment, emphasizing that the market is mature, competitive and functioning efficiently, with no evidence of market failure. COAI further submitted that allowing ISPs to offer DLC services would create an uneven playing field due to disparate licensing obligations. COAI also participated in the Open House Discussion held by the Authority on 17 April 2026 and emphasized its submissions made in the response.

● TRAI issued the Draft Notification on Telecom Consumer Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 on 7 April 2026, mandating the introduction of packages exclusively for Voice and SMS, with validity periods aligned to those of existing bundled Voice, SMS and data STVs. Such Voice and SMS-only STVs are required to be priced with a largely proportionate reduction compared to the corresponding bundled plans. The issue has been discussed with COAI members, and a suitable response is being prepared, highlighting how the proposed amendment runs contrary to the vision of Digital India.

● With respect to the registration of new M2MSPs, DoT, vide its order dated 24 October 2025, suspended the acceptance of new applications on the Saral Sanchar portal with effect from 10 November 2025. Members had suggested that a representation be made to DoT seeking an interim mechanism for the registration of new M2MSPs on the Saral Sanchar portal. COAI had earlier submitted two letters to DoT on 26 November 2025 and 5 March 2026 on this subject. A follow-up letter was also submitted on 21 April 2026, and an early update from DoT is awaited.

### Telecom Infrastructure Committee

● A submission was made to the Hon'ble Minister of Communications on 22 April 2026 regarding the persistent and continuous disruptions in deployed overhead OFC across multiple cities in the country, especially Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Chennai and Varanasi, owing to various reasons including beautification drives. The submission sought support in addressing the industry's concerns

through suggested approaches.

● A submission was made to the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai on 24 April 2026, requesting extension of permission for road carriageway trenching till 31 May 2026 and continuation of allied administrative processes, including application acceptance and approvals, even during restriction or ban periods. This was done in view of the order issued by the Municipal Corporation vide letter No. Ch.E/571/Rds & Tr dated 17 April 2026 regarding trench excavation.

● A letter was submitted to the Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra, on 13 April 2026, requesting relaxation in the conversion process of agricultural land for telecom infrastructure rollout. An example of a similar development in Gujarat was also cited.

● An online pre-SBC meeting with Rajasthan LSA and members was organized on 22 April 2026 to discuss RoW-related issues to be raised during the upcoming SBC meeting. Preparatory internal meetings with members were also held on 17 April 2026 and 20 April 2026.

● Members were informed on 1 April 2026 that the Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High Court has held that telecom tower installation approvals cannot be arbitrarily withdrawn by authorities on vague public interest grounds or due to local opposition, in the absence of specific legal provisions. This judgment reinforces regulatory certainty for telecom infrastructure deployment in the State of Punjab.

● A submission was made on 1 April 2026 to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, highlighting challenges faced by the telecom industry in diesel availability and seeking necessary support to ensure uninterrupted operations.

● The Central Electricity Authority, on 1 April 2026, notified the Amendment Regulations, 2026 to the Installation and Operation of Meters Regulations, clarifying metering arrangements for Open Access consumers. This development will support the telecom industry and has been a long-standing demand from COAI.

- A submission was made to the Special Secretary, Power, GNCTD, on 6 April 2026, seeking alignment and rationalization of pole leasing charges levied by DISCOMs in Delhi for aerial OFC deployments.
- A submission was made on 6 April 2026 to the Chairman, Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission, presenting industry views on Aggregate Revenue Requirement and tariff determination for FY 2026–27.
- Submissions were made to the Chairman, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission, on 8 April 2026 and to the Chief Secretary, Delhi, on 23 April 2026, requesting provision of electricity under the Industrial Tariff category for Data Centers to support sector growth.
- Industry comments and suggestions were submitted on 10 April 2026 to the Ministry of Power on the Draft Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Amendment Rules, 2026, focusing on safeguarding telecom infrastructure requirements and ensuring consumer-friendly provisions.
- Chandigarh LSA conveyed on 16 April 2026 that the Composite Billing System has been introduced by Chandigarh Power Distribution Ltd. Members were requested to utilize the system and share feedback for further improvements.
- The Uttar Pradesh State Broadband Committee meeting was held on 17 April 2026 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. COAI highlighted key industry issues impacting telecom infrastructure deployment and sought necessary interventions.
- The Ministry of Railways revised its RoW guidelines on 17 April 2026 to align with the Telecommunications (RoW) Rules, 2024, enabling licensing of railway land for telecom infrastructure.
- A submission was made to the Secretary, Telecom, on 21 April 2026 seeking intervention for effective implementation of RoW Rules, 2024 in Punjab and resolution of industry concerns.
- A demo session was conducted on 23 April 2026 by Himachal Pradesh LSA in coordination with HPSEBL for TSP/IP members, showcasing updates in the electricity department portal for facilitating consolidated billing payments.
- A submission was made to the Commissioner, MCD, on 27 April 2026 requesting exemption of Way Leave charges for telecom infrastructure to promote ease of deployment.
- A submission was made to the Chief Secretary, Delhi, on 27 April 2026 seeking intervention for addressing persistent RoW-related challenges faced by telecom operators in the State.
- Separate submissions were made on 28 April 2026 to the CEOs of Noida Authority and Greater Noida Authority, requesting alignment of permission processes and charges, especially for tower installation, with the RoW Rules, 2024. The matter was also discussed in the recent UP SBC meeting, where the Chair had agreed to the industry demand.
- National Broadband Mission conveyed on 28 April 2026

that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways portal has been integrated with DoT's eServices portal. Applicants can now apply using a single login. Members were advised to utilize the platform and share feedback.

- The Tripura State Broadband Committee meeting was held on 16 April 2026 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. COAI highlighted key industry issues impacting telecom infrastructure deployment and sought necessary interventions.
- The Government of India issued the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment Scheme for 2026–27, allocating INR 4,000 crore as incentive to States for implementing and facilitating the Right of Way Rules, 2024. The industry worked with NBM, DoT, on details for operationalizing the scheme for maximum benefit. A series of interactions, including an in-person meeting with NBM, was held on 9 April 2026.

### Technology Committee

- With reference to the continuing deliberations within DoT on aligning India's EMF exposure limits with the internationally accepted ICNIRP guidelines, COAI submitted a letter on 17 April 2026 requesting abeyance of EMF exposure compliance auditing at LSA level until a final decision is taken on alignment with ICNIRP guidelines.
- With reference to the TRAI Draft Telecom Commercial Communication Preference (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2026, COAI submitted a letter on 16 April 2026 to TRAI seeking a further extension to respond to the draft regulations. Thereafter, COAI submitted its response to TRAI on 20 April 2026.
- COAI submitted a letter to TRAI on 2 April 2026 requesting adoption of a holistic and technology-neutral approach to address spam and digital communication fraud. The submission recommended extending proportionate regulatory safeguards across all relevant platforms, including all communication platforms offering person-to-person voice, messaging and video services in India, such as VoLTE, VoNR, RCS and app-based OTT platforms.
- COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 23 April 2026 regarding the proposed Telecom Import Monitoring System and Telecom Export Monitoring System. COAI submitted that, given the robust compliance mechanisms already in place, there is a strong case for re-evaluating the necessity of introducing additional frameworks such as TIMS and TEMS for telecom products. COAI also submitted that avoiding duplication will reduce regulatory overlap and operational complexity, enabling industry stakeholders to remain agile, adapt to evolving technologies, enhance customer outcomes and support India's goal of building a robust and competitive telecom ecosystem.



# COAI News Wires:

West Asia's digital fault lines.  
**The Financial Express**



AI, 5G and 6G dominate agenda as telecom leaders map India's digital future at COAI Summit.

**ET Telecom**

Dr Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani urges India to write global 6G standards at COAI Summit.

**ET Government**





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Get to know us better. Our social media platforms are a great way to learn about our upcoming events, opportunities, latest trends and more. Follow us and join a diverse group of people across the nation and all around the world

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