

Digital is the New Real



II. Key Statistics of the
Wireless Industry in
India

Annual Report
2021-22

COAI



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डा० पी. डी. वाघेला
Dr. P. D. Vaghela



सत्यमेव जयते

अध्यक्ष
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Chairman

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Message



The telecom sector is now widely acknowledged to have played a paramount role in keeping the nation connected during the difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. With data being key today, telecom has become one of the most transformational technologies steering India towards progressive development.

Growth of Digital India

The number of internet subscribers has increased to 829.30 million at the end of December 2021. Wireless data usage and the overall tele density across India has also registered significant hikes over the past year. In other words, the exponential rise in data consumption shows that digital is the new "real" in the post-pandemic era.

Mobile network infrastructure determines the quality of user experience and the extent of coverage and strength of the network. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), mapping real-time industry data, estimates that the telecommunications subscriber base grew marginally to 1.16 billion as on February 2022. There is presently a need for network densification to meet the demands for coverage in indoor and outdoor environments.

5G Revolution

To meet the challenges, telecom companies - the digital innovators of our age — are coming together to invest in communications infrastructure, including emerging technologies such as 5G and cloud computing, to work towards the betterment of the sector collectively. With numerous telecom operators sharing the burden of infrastructure, affordable coverage can be achieved by lowering the cost of network deployment — especially in rural areas or marginal markets.

Mobile infrastructure sharing may also stimulate migration to new technologies and mobile broadband deployment. For example, in the case of 5G, simplifying procedures for small cell deployment on street furniture will not only reduce cost, but will also provide a ready-made environment for faster roll-out of the 5G network.

TRAI has also recommended the creation of a National Portal for RoW permissions, exemption of charges, and a proper regulatory framework to support the deployment of digital infrastructure, which will pave the way for faster 5G deployment.

In dynamically changing sector, the role of COAI in highlighting key policy issues remains as important as ever. I wish COAI the very best of luck in all consecutive endeavors and hope for the continued success of the robust platform, where the government, the regulator, and the industry can all freely exchange ideas for ultimate objective of Telecom development and economy of the Nation as a whole.

(P.D. Vaghela)

महानगर दूरसंचार भवन, जवाहर लाल नेहरू मार्ग, (पुराना मिनटो रोड), नई दिल्ली-110002
Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, (Old Minto Road) New Delhi-110002
Tel : 23211236/ 23213409/ Fax : 91-11-23236026/ E-mail : cp@trai.gov.in/www.trai.gov.in

के. राजारामन, भा. प्र. से.
सचिव
K. Rajaraman, IAS
Secretary



सत्यमेव जयते



भारत सरकार
संचार मंत्रालय
दूरसंचार विभाग
Government of India
Ministry of Communications
Department of Telecommunications



Message

I would like to congratulate COAI on another great year. The robust performance of COAI and its constituent members is tremendously contributing toward availability of telecommunication services in the country. In the knowledge-intensive world, Indian telecommunication sector has emerged as an essential digital infrastructure for the growth of the economy and all-round socio-economic development.

The structural and procedural reforms announced in September 2021 are yielding results and will further enable the industry to strengthen itself and provide more affordable and high-quality services. The Government is also focused on enhancing the ease of doing business and reducing and simplifying the compliance burden.

The Government's commitment in creating a robust telecom sector and an enabling digital ecosystem is reflected in the Union Budget 2022-23. Be it the assurance to conduct 5G auctions in 2022 or the renewed focus on Bharat Net and the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) plan, the Union Budget complemented the momentum created by the structural and policy reforms and set the tone of optimism for the sector.

Decks are clear for India to leap into next-generation 5G technology. In line with the long-term vision of Digital India, the Government realises the potential that 5G can bring to the entire value chain across consumers and businesses. The Department of Telecommunications looks forward toward COAI and its members in expeditiously rolling out 5G services.

I wish COAI all the best for their future endeavours.


(K. Rajaraman)

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

The two years of COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to establish last-mile connectivity across India. Everything – from schools and colleges to private offices – went virtual, requiring a host of digital and multimedia approaches to keep the society functional. Such a scenario provided a timely opportunity for telecom companies to explore new technological advances, heralding the commencement of one of the biggest tech revolutions in the country's history. The COAI has been playing a leading role in expediting the early adoption of emerging digital standards such as 5G, AI, AR, and VR so that everyone can reap the benefits of economies of scale. During the pandemic, the Association enabled efficient communication between telecom operators, industry stakeholders, and government bodies by efficiently keeping every channel functional. With the momentum now set for a steady economic recovery, the telecom industry is consistently forging its way ahead, encouraged by the government's and the DoT's positive stimulus.

Along with the benefits, this transition has also brought forth certain security concerns. To ensure that Digital India stay focused to its vision, the COAI has taken active steps to safeguard the telecom infrastructure across multiple regions. Through appropriate deputations, the association has been guiding every State/UT in India to issue necessary directions for telecom and digital infrastructure safety in their respective jurisdictions. It is encouraging to note that Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur, and several other states issued positive directions to safeguard telecom infrastructure, directing the concerned Deputy Commissioners/

District Collectors/Superintendent of Police to be extra vigilant.

Developing an existing infrastructural base to the state-of-the-art standards also requires combatting misinformation and substituting it with authentic facts regarding emerging technologies. With a permit from TRAI, the COAI was also granted an extension to conduct online Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) that reinforced the idea that telecom services are a lifeline for the nation, especially in trying times of isolation. Four states, including Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand, took suitable action based on the COAI's recommendations to provide priority electricity connections to the telecom industry. This was a key achievement, as hundreds of millions of people depend on these networks to access real-time information when they need it the most.

Despite challenges, the telecom industry achieved significant milestones through sheer will and coordinated efforts among various stakeholders over the past year. Based on the COAI's recommendations, Track Rent Charges have now been scratched off in Tamil Nadu; it is estimated that this will lead to annual savings of approximately 15 crores for the entire telecom industry. The COAI got telecom workers in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, and several other states categorized as frontline warriors and helped them get vaccinated on priority.

The association also actively worked with Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to allow businesses get digitized, keeping up with the advancements. To streamline the updation of subscribers' data, the government allowed telecom operators to digitize Customer

Application Forms (CAFs), eliminating the need to store paper forms in the warehouses. These necessary resolutions from the government form an integral part of the vision to elevate the nation into a digital era.

The government initiated multiple structural and procedural reforms to encourage investment in the telecom sector and reduce the regulatory burden on service providers. The rationalization of Adjusted Gross Revenue is expected to create an enabling environment for investment and further boost the penetration of telecom connectivity. Through the flagship Digital India and BharatNet projects, the Government of India is on the ambitious

road to extending inclusive internet access to every Indian, thus bridging the digital divide and bringing marginalized populations into the mainstream.

With such transformational initiatives, the importance of telecommunication for socio-economic development is under the spotlight, more so than ever. I want to thank all those in the telecom sector and government who are mobilizing, synchronizing, and concertedly preparing for the telecom revolution, which promises a new dawn for a society that thrives on innovation and advanced technologies.

Chairperson, COAI



VICE CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



The mainstay of communication during COVID-19, the Indian telecom sector, post-pandemic, has made rapid progress with noted hikes in the overall subscriber base, data consumption, and efforts to ramp up the associated infrastructure.

Recognising the fact that telecom has played a substantial role in bridging the digital divide between the remotest corners of the country, India is gearing up to embrace avant-garde technologies like 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), robotics, and big data analytics that will transform industries, improve user experience, and take the nation a step closer to being a \$5 trillion economy by 2025.

Ushering in the 5G Revolution

A conducive regulatory environment and rising telecom revenues in the last quarter have enabled Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to focus on digitising their businesses. To embrace 5G technology, the industry will have to make extensive investments to expand network capacity, establish more telecom towers, deploy Optical Fiber Cables (OFCs) along with the existing and new towers, dispel myths around electromagnetic field (EMF) radiations, and upgrade the existing security infrastructure. There is a need for immediate relief to bolster the financial health of the telecom sector so that the TSPs can make the required investments and turn the dream of a Digital India into a concrete reality.

Fibre Infrastructure

COAI estimates that an investment of around Rs. 2.2 trillion is required in optical fibre infrastructure to upgrade 70 per cent of the existing mobile towers and an additional investment of Rs. 2.5 trillion in the next four years to establish a network of 1.5 million towers connected to fibre. To set up an environment ready to roll out 5G technology, the telecom industry must focus on three key aspects – spectrum pricing, infrastructure building (including the fiberisation of towers), and pan-India coverage.

Digital is the New Real

The post-pandemic world has laid bare the digital reality, triggered by a need to stay interconnected more than ever. The world received an inadvertent push towards digitalisation and accelerated the adoption of digital technology, highlighting the idea that “digital is the new reality”. Being one of the fastest-growing markets of digital subscribers, India is also poised to embrace new-age technology to run at pace with the rest of the world. This is where 5G is key; the enhanced digital capability will initiate India, which is digitising faster than most other countries in the world, to integrate state-of-the-art technologies such as the IoT, AI, AR, VR, and even drone-assisted machinery.

By the end of 2025, 5G will account for over a fifth of total mobile connections, and, according to current estimates, more than

FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S DESK



The year 2021 has been a defining year for the industry. It would be reminisced for key milestone reforms like the telecom relief package, 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) under automatic route in the telecom sector, reduction of Financial Bank Guarantee (FBG) and Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) requirements, amendment of Indian Telegraph RoW rules, benefits for the companies under Rs. 12,000-crore PLI incentives for building network products, developments in 5G trials for 5G roll-out among others that changed the face of the telecom sector. The reform package was quick to alleviate the financial health of the TSPs giving it the necessary impetus to re-inspire confidence in the sector for making investments.

Moving in the direction of improving telecommunication infrastructure, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched an ambitious Gati Shakti, a multi-modal connectivity plan which is aimed to expedite the infrastructural project implementation, thereby accelerating economic growth. Gati Shakti will provide a big boost to India's telecom infrastructure. The multi-modal connectivity will provide integrated and seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods, and services from one mode of transport to another. It will facilitate the last mile connectivity of infrastructure and reduce travel time for people. The Indian telecom industry is proud to be associated with this program.

The history of Indian telecom sector has witnessed that its growth and success has

been driven by policy initiatives taken by the Government at various points of time. I am confident that these reforms will play a vital role in shaping telecommunication industry and in scripting the success of Digital India and in accelerating the journey to meet Digital India goals which will ultimately deliver ample benefit to the individual consumers. The industry is encouraged to see that even going forward the approach of the Government is towards ease of doing business.

As the pandemic spilled into this year again, the industry helped sustain businesses, provide information, connect people and allay fears. When the whole world was grappling with the fear of the unknown, the Indian telecom sector was utilized to become the biggest contributor to fight coronavirus by leveraging digital technology and a coordinated global digital response to fight the pandemic. It is with mobile technology that we were able to embark on one of the world's largest Covid-19 vaccination drives.

Today we stand at a threshold of a digital revolution stimulated by 5G, it is the roadmap to the future growth and socio-economic development of our country that aspires to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025. The wireless mobile user base is only going to grow in the future as more and more people rely on high-speed connectivity for their daily utility. Therefore, there is a need to spur investment in this area to produce a reliable and affordable broadband connection that reaches every nook and corner of the nation to provide connectivity. Through the

‘National Broadband Mission 2019’, the Government has embarked on this intrepid journey of eliminating the digital divide by bringing broadband access to all the villages by 2022.

STATUS ON POLICY AND REGULATORY ISSUES

The year witnessed the historic reform package by the Government. These reforms come in the backdrop of the exceptional capability of India’s telecom sector in fulfilling the needs of a developing economy, despite the COVID-19 challenges, which resulted in a huge surge in data consumption, online education, work from home, and enhanced interpersonal connection through social media, virtual meetings, and such. The reform measures are expected to further boost the proliferation and penetration of broadband and telecom connectivity, in line with Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision of a robust telecom sector. These reforms prioritize competition and customer choice, advocate for inclusive development, bring marginalized areas into the mainstream, and provide universal broadband access to connect the unconnected. The package is also expected to boost 4G proliferation, infuse liquidity, and create an enabling environment for investment in 5G networks.

COAI’s efforts in the last year were towards digital revolution in India, the need for investments to enable the transition from 2G to 4G and 5G to eradicate the digital divide, the need for affordable services, devices and applications, the need for strong ubiquitous digital infrastructure, the need for simple regulatory regime and a litigation free environment and the need for improving the ease of doing business. COAI was actively involved throughout the year in providing a much-important platform among telecom operators, industry stakeholders, and government bodies and enabling the channels to remain functional and updated.

One of the key tools in this modern engine propelling India towards a digital revolution is the 5G technology, which will transform industries by connecting more businesses than ever to the internet. In addition to advocating for immediate financial reliefs to the telecom sector so that the TSPs can make the required investments, COAI highlighted the importance of availability and right pricing of spectrum for the country.

As we all know and understand by now, digital is the new reality for us, and it is here to stay. However, the path towards that future is riddled with adversities that need strong conviction and effort to overcome. COAI, seeking the adoption of regularized standards for 5G in India, submitted that the Government might make efforts for global harmonization of 5G standards by making it a part of 3GPP to ensure early adoption by operators without any policy intervention and all stakeholders can reap the benefits of economies of scale. 5G has been officially closed and will soon be merged with 3GPP-Rel 17 standards. Following the COAI submission, the Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) will also adopt 3GPP Rel-15 & 3GPP Rel-16 as the national standards of India.

COAI also played a crucial role in demystifying misinformation linking 5G technology that is being spread in several regions of the country. Based on COAI’s request, positive directions were issued by Haryana, UP Police, Gujarat, and Rajasthan to “Demystify the Misinformation being spread linking 5G technology and testing with the COVID-19 pandemic”.

Not just these, COAI was also actively involved in conducting Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) virtually during the pandemic. It helped simplify Mobile Number Portability, enforced suitable action in several states on providing Electricity connections to the telecom industry, helped telecom warriors get categorized as frontline workers to get the vaccines on priority, and also saved an estimated 15 crore annually for the telecom industry by leading a coordinated joint effort to eliminate Track Rent Charges, that resulted in the Govt of Tamil Nadu taking the charges off.

Mobile Infrastructure plays a fundamental role in making telecom services available to large sections of the population because without the required infrastructure network cannot operate. Connectivity and communications services are deployed over network infrastructure that includes electronic and non-electronic components such as physical sites and towers that determines the quality of user experience and the extent of coverage and strength of the network. It plays the biggest role in facilitating seamless network connectivity across India.

COAI took steps to safeguard the telecom infrastructure across regions. It sent representations to the Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs to issue necessary directions for telecom and digital infrastructure safety in their respective jurisdictions. As a direct result of this request, various State Governments issued positive directions to the concerned Deputy Commissioners/District Collectors/Superintendent of Police to be vigilant and take necessary action in safeguarding the Telecom/Digital Infrastructure in their jurisdiction.

There can be very effective Collaboration between the Telecom Sector and the Power Sector for the deployment of the digital infrastructure in the country. The Telecom Service Providers can use the infrastructure of the Electricity Board (Discoms) such as EB Poles, Street light Poles etc. for the deployment of the aerial fibre and the small cells. This helps the TSPs to reduce their cost while it gives the revenue opportunity for the EB company (Discoms).

The Government, Regulator and the industry has also realized how important small cells are for the deployment of 5G in the country to enhance the communication network. COAI is working closely with both the Government and the Regulator on this aspect. Along with TRAI COAI is conducting Pilots at various locations including port, airport, metro rails and a smart city to check the viability and effectiveness of small cells & it's roles in 5G technology. TEC has also issued a report on small cells to facilitate a standard approach for proliferation of denser small cell infrastructure in the country. DoT has also simplified the SACFA guidelines for small cells.

With the expected rollout of 5G in 2022, there are some key challenges that the Indian market faces such as less market of 5G enabled devices, non-uniform RoW charges across states, irrational regulatory levies such as LF, SUC, USO levy and costs. Government is yet to allocate high capacity backhaul E-band and V-band to eliminate the issue of backhaul, as only 34% of BTS sites have been connected to fibre networks in the country. There were issues of centralized regulated frameworks and single-window online portals for monitoring or managing digital growth, which was causing lag in implementation, however, we believe that the central RoW portal will resolve these issues.

The future outlook of the telecom industry is rolling-out 5G in full swing, capacitated by the pro-growth policies of the government. A 5G enabled environment would help India to run with the pace of the world. As per predictions, by 2027, 5G will represent around 39 per cent of mobile subscriptions in India, with an estimated 500 million subscriptions. The Indian market needs to get ready for 5G-enabled devices to have a successful roll-out in the near future. Apart from the developments and prospects of 5G in India, the coming year will pave the way for various other new-age technologies such as internet of things, big data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), drone technology coupled with 5G technology, which will positively impact various sectors. For example, these technologies will boost the agricultural sector by improving the yield, bringing transparency across the value chain, ensuring smarter supporting infrastructure while also increasing farm returns. The integration of technology in the classroom is the key to educating and skilling students for success. AR and VR will change the educational landscape by making learning more engrossing and tech oriented.

COAI and its member operators will continue their focus on building the new age digital infrastructure to support the nation and providing value to their customers, advocating for a stable, long term, sustainable, policy and regulatory environment which will promote innovation and orderly growth for a fully connected and digitally empowered India delivered through a financially strong and viable industry. We also look forward to continuing our partnership with the Government and Regulator to achieve the above vision.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

Keeping in mind the safety of all parties involved, this edition of India Mobile Congress was a virtual event, scheduled from 08th December through 10th December 2021, with the theme “**Connectivity for the next decade**”. IMC 2021 had 23,118 visitors, national and international delegates, over 140 partners & exhibitors, 65 Make in India booths, 10 5G start-ups and more than 226 speakers. The conference had 41 keynote sessions, 21 panel discussions and 13 fireside chats, with session views of 11,535 spanning three days.

The event was supported and encouraged by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji with a futuristic message for Indian telecom industry, and inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnav Ji and was attended by various respected government and industry leaders. These included Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, Shri Devusinh Chauhan, the Secretary (T) & Chairman DDC, Department of Telecommunication, Shri K Rajaraman, Special Secretary (T) Department of Telecommunication, Smt. Anita Praveen, the Chairman Bharti Enterprises, Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal, the Chairman Reliance Industries Limited, Mr. Mukesh Ambani, the chairman Aditya Birla Group, Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla and the Director General of COAI Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar AVSM**, SM, VSM, ADC, KIGA, along with the who's who of the telecom and allied sectors.

The focus area for IMC 2021 was 5G and emerging technologies and how they will transform the coming decade. Apart from 5G its use cases and consumer impact, other focus areas were during the event were Internet of Things (IoT), network automation, policy and regulations, digital inclusion, Open RAN, and cyber security. Various areas concerning and impacting telecommunication industry were also discussed during the event such as Gati-Shakti and Atmanirbhar Bharat PLI scheme projects.

To keep pace with the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and following the social distancing norms, COAI organized various webinars to discuss the changing world of telecom during these critical times and on upcoming technologies.

The COAI Executive Council – headed by Chairman, Mr. Ajai Puri, Vice Chairman, Mr. P.K. Mittal, and comprising senior representatives from all member

operators are, as always, an integral part of the progress that the Association has been making, by consistently taking forward the respective discussions on a host of issues plaguing the telecom industry. The council was ably assisted by professional advice from the various Working Committees set up in COAI.

I express my heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to all the Committees and Working Groups, their Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, for providing unstinted support and cooperation to the COAI. As always, I thank you all for taking the time out of your busy schedules to contribute to various industry issues and helping the association represent itself in a proficient and timely manner.

I would like to thank the Chairman, Mr. Ajai Puri, and the Vice Chairman, Mr. P.K. Mittal, for their involvement and support in all the activities and initiatives of the Association for the last year, despite the tough times posed by the pandemic. Their vigor enlivens India's digital dreams and motivates us as an industry to jointly lead efforts that will enable our country to run at pace with the rest of the world. Their cooperation and personal involvement has helped COAI uplift our work to the next level. We request their continued support and guidance in future as well.

Last but not the least, I would like to record my deep gratitude to the COAI Secretariat team which has always provided excellent support and assistance in all our endeavors. I appreciate their willingness and dedication in taking up new projects and contributing successfully towards it. I deeply appreciate all their efforts in contributing significantly to all the achievements of COAI.

Lt. Gen Dr. S P Kochhar
Director General

06

THEME ARTICLE- DIGITAL IS THE NEW REAL



India is on the verge of digitalization and the telecom industry is ready to embrace that in full potential. The opportunity in this sector is wide open and can lead to a massive line of revenue for the businesses across. The global digital transformation market was valued at USD 998.99 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach a value of USD 2744.68 billion by 2026, at a CAGR of 17.42% during the period of 2021-2026¹. Earlier the network providers used to provide services of SMS, voice calls and data. But this is the era of virtualization and the customer demand for a network provider that can cater to their virtualization needs has also generated.

It is no surprise that digital has become our major communication source, our workspace, our meeting space and even our dancefloor. This digital transformation has led us to growth, agility, innovation, acquisition of new skills, capabilities, new business models, revenue sources and enhanced customer experience. The focus area of the operators has swiftly moved towards improving the user's experience and engagement. Omni-channel and personalization stand out to be the key area. Operators have started focusing on the automation

aspect so as to enhance their service areas and create a good end-user experience. The telecom industry is the foundation to this era of digitalization and molding the way people communicate and conduct businesses. The fourth industrial revolution has a lot to offer to the world with the emerging trends of 5G, Big data, IoT, edge computing, AI, and machine learning.

India is among the top 10 nations in the world in terms of technological advancements and findings in Artificial Intelligence. To be precise, India ranks sixth in terms of spending and investments on AI made by the public, governmental initiatives, as well as private institutions and organizations. AI is projected to add \$ 500 billion to India's GDP by 2025.²

Further, The Indian Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality Market stood at USD1.83 billion in FY2020 and is forecast to grow at a CAGR of 38.29% until FY2027³. Growth in the Indian Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality Market is driven by the accelerating digital transformation of the country.

5G will play a crucial role in accelerating digital transformation of the country. It will help in

¹<https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/digital-transformation-market>

²<https://newsonair.com/2022/01/23/india-among-top-10-global-ai-adopters-the-scope-infrastructure-status-read-to-know/>

³<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210920005664/en/India-1.83-Bn-Augmented-Reality-and-Virtual-Reality-Market-Analysis-Competition-Forecast-Opportunities-2017-2020-2021-2027---ResearchAndMarkets.com#:~:text=The%20Indian%20Augmented%20Reality%20and,digital%20transformation%20of%20the%20country.>

connecting people across geographical boundaries. We recently witnessed this, when the world was hit by the pandemic, doctors across the country were able to treat and guide their patients remotely. IoMT connected medical devices, hardware infrastructure, and software applications, this has allowed remote devices to securely communicate and led to the analysis of medical data. The increasing trend of videoconferencing, telemedicine, are all among the many proofs of the growing importance of telecommunications in every user's life. A recent survey even suggests that the overall Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) market is expected to be \$158 billion by 2022⁴. These advancing technologies will also require the transfer of a large amount of data and if not taken care in the right way, could lead to challenges in terms of security.

The government has started looking up the policies to initiate the path to build this digital infrastructure by having a fresh look at the issues, including

legislative framework, spectrum management, broadband infrastructure, and R&D. Consumer transparency should equally be promoted. Assessment and certification of connected devices for security should be done. Moreover, international bodies should be re-engaged. In addition to this, there should be no compromise in adhering to the globally harmonized security standards developed by 3GPP standardization body for 5G.

The tough times of pandemic has played an important role in the advancement of digitalization in the industry. Right from education, health, commerce, finance, and telecommunication every aspect of life has taken a digital revolution. The demand of the customers has also experienced a digital shift and the environment has become sheer competitive, now the network operators' primary focus is to ensure maximum benefits for the users and offer quality services.

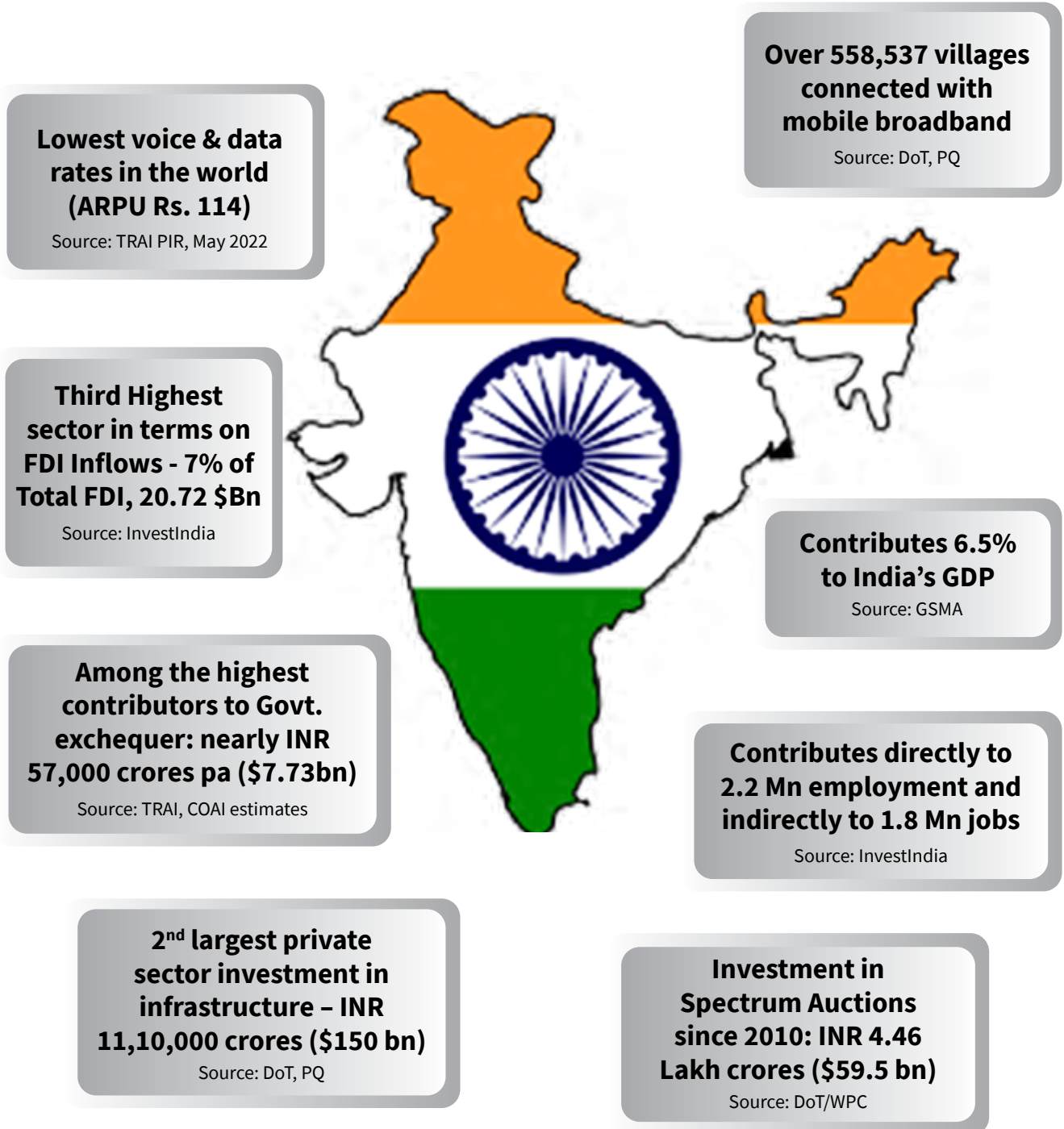
⁴<https://www.insiderintelligence.com/insights/iot-healthcare/>





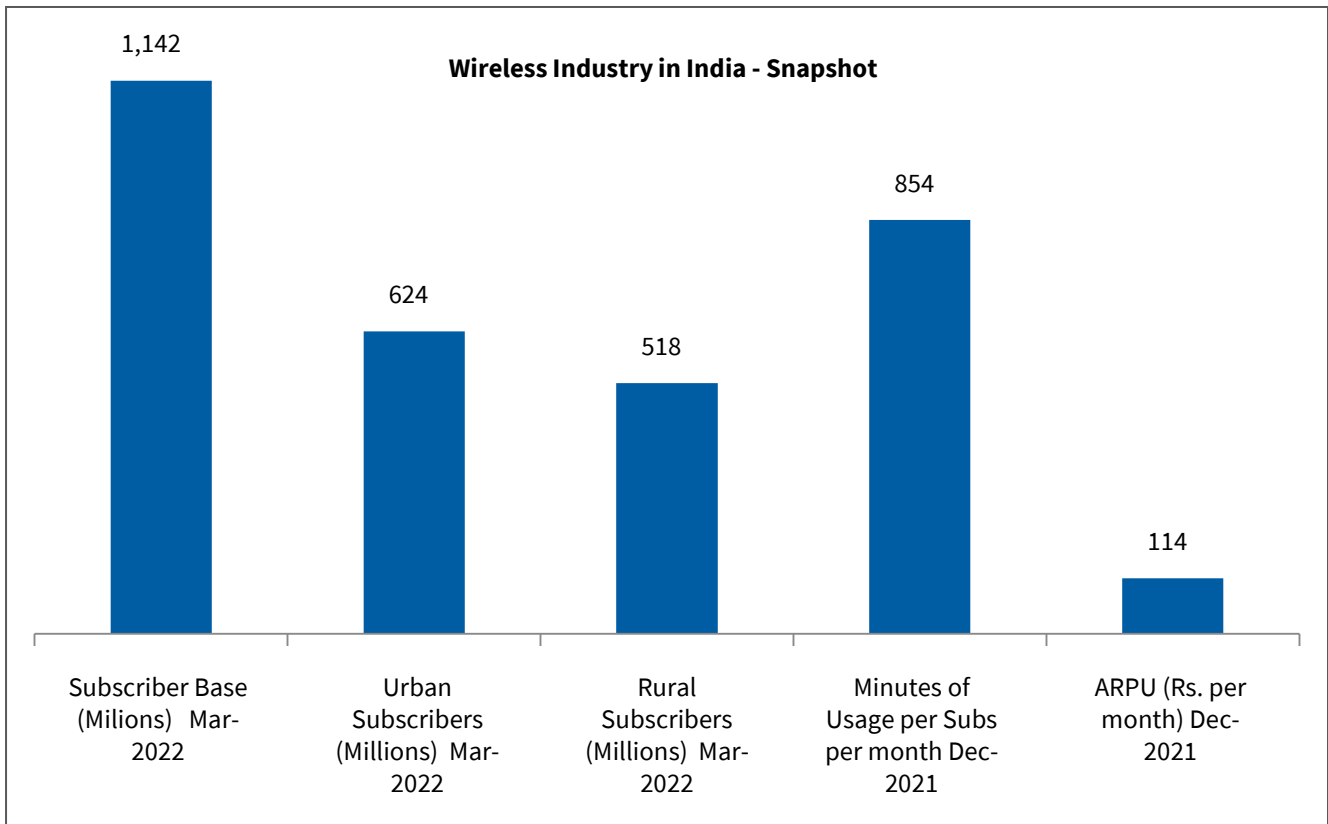
07 INDIAN TELECOM INDUSTRY - AN OVERVIEW

I. Telecom Industry – Contribution to India



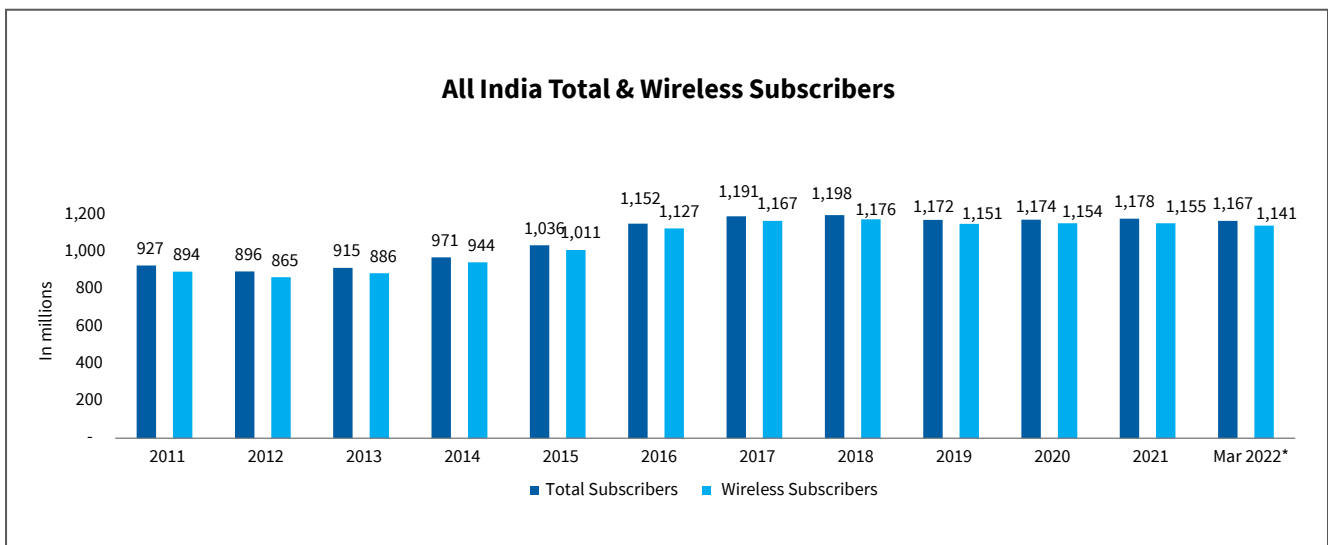
Source: GSMA The Mobile Economy India Report, 2016, DoT, Industry Estimates, TRAI, PQ= Parliament Question
Note: 1) Contribution to Government includes L.F, SUC and GST

II. Key Statistics of the Wireless Industry in India



Source: TRAI

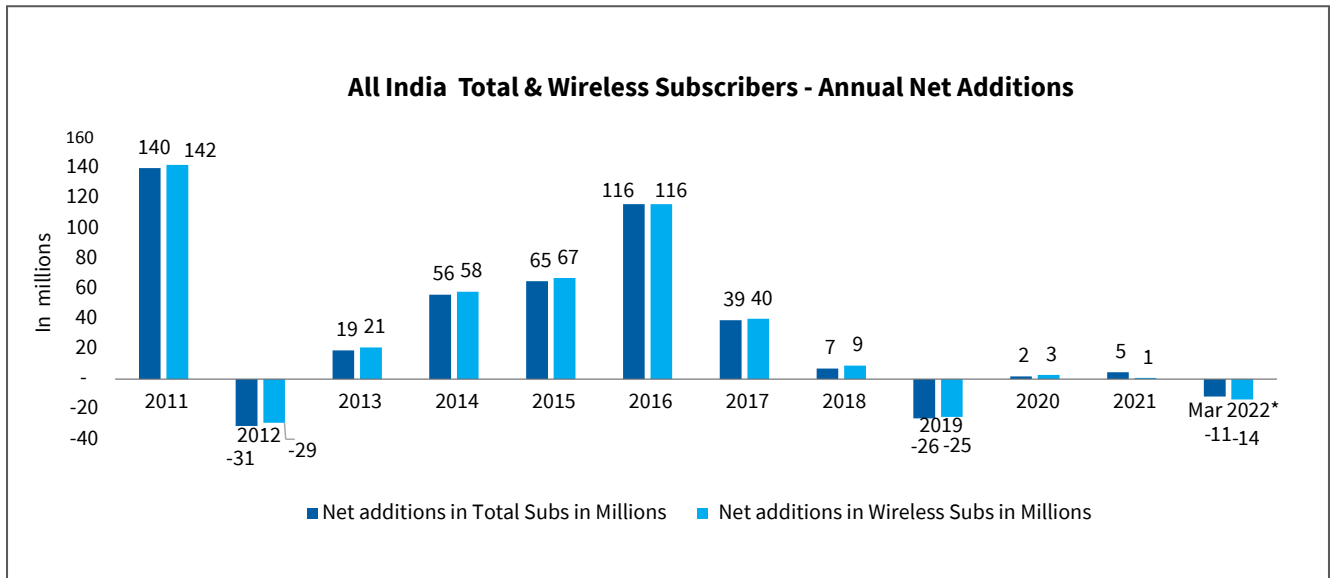
A. All India Total & Wireless Subscribers



Source: TRAI

Note : 2011 to 2021 data is as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

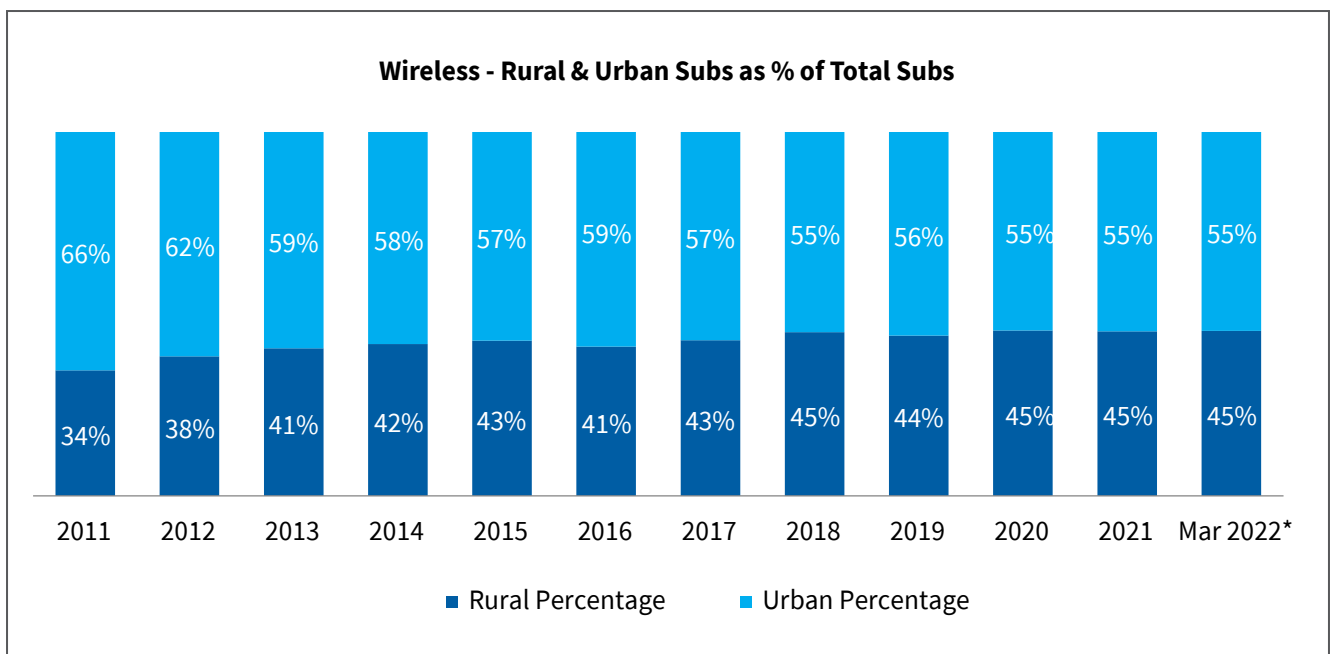
B. All India Total & Wireless Subscribers - Annual Net Additions



Source: TRAI

Note : Subscriber Figures from 2011-2021 are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

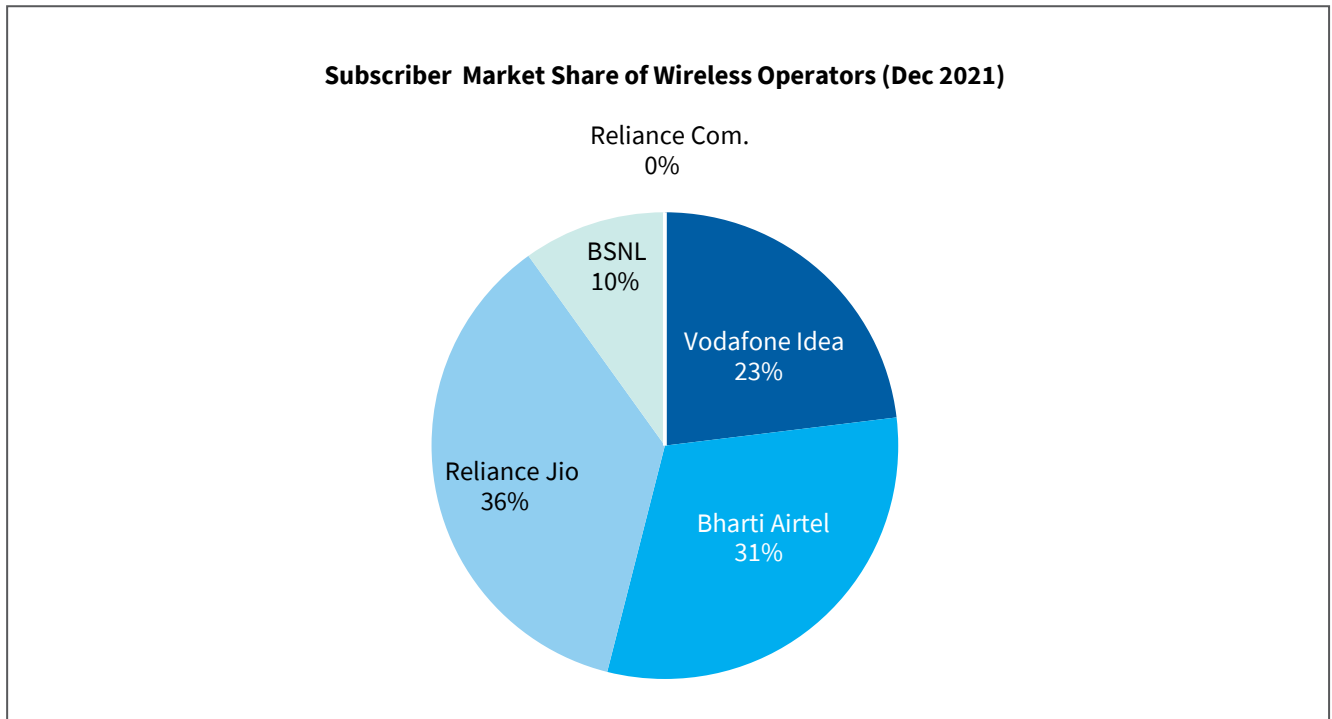
C. Wireless - Rural & Urban Subs as % of Total Subs



Source: TRAI

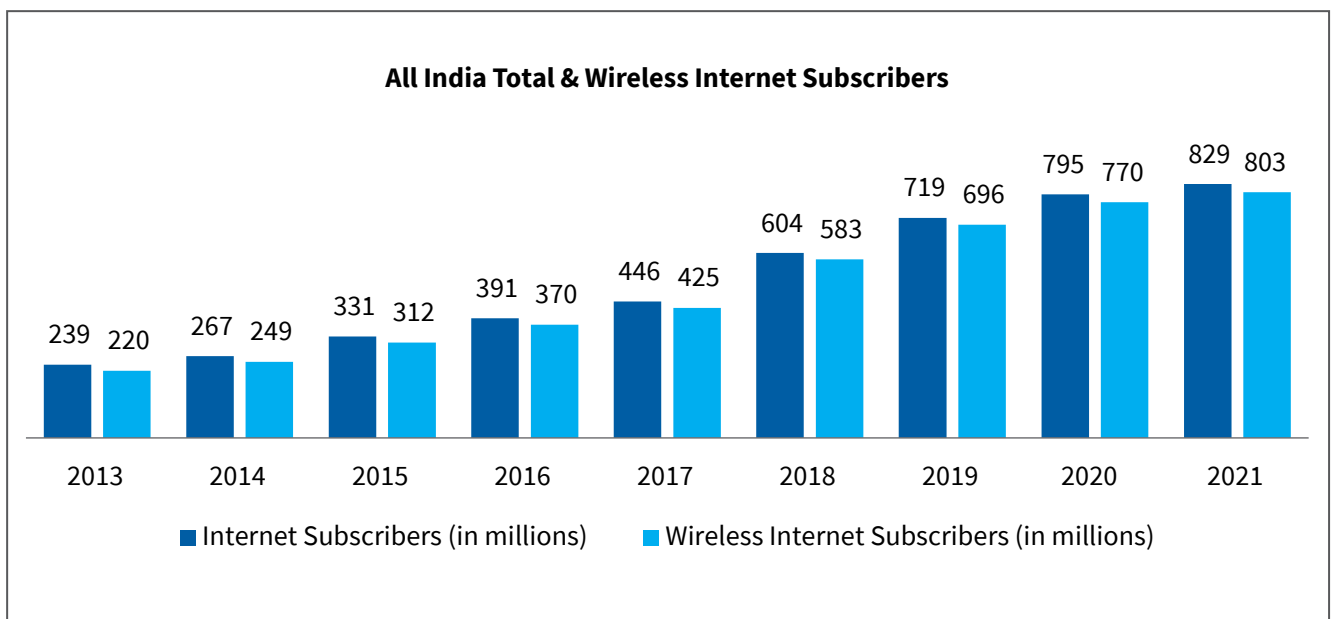
Note: Figures are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

D. Subscriber Market Share of Wireless Operators (Dec 2021)



Source: TRAI

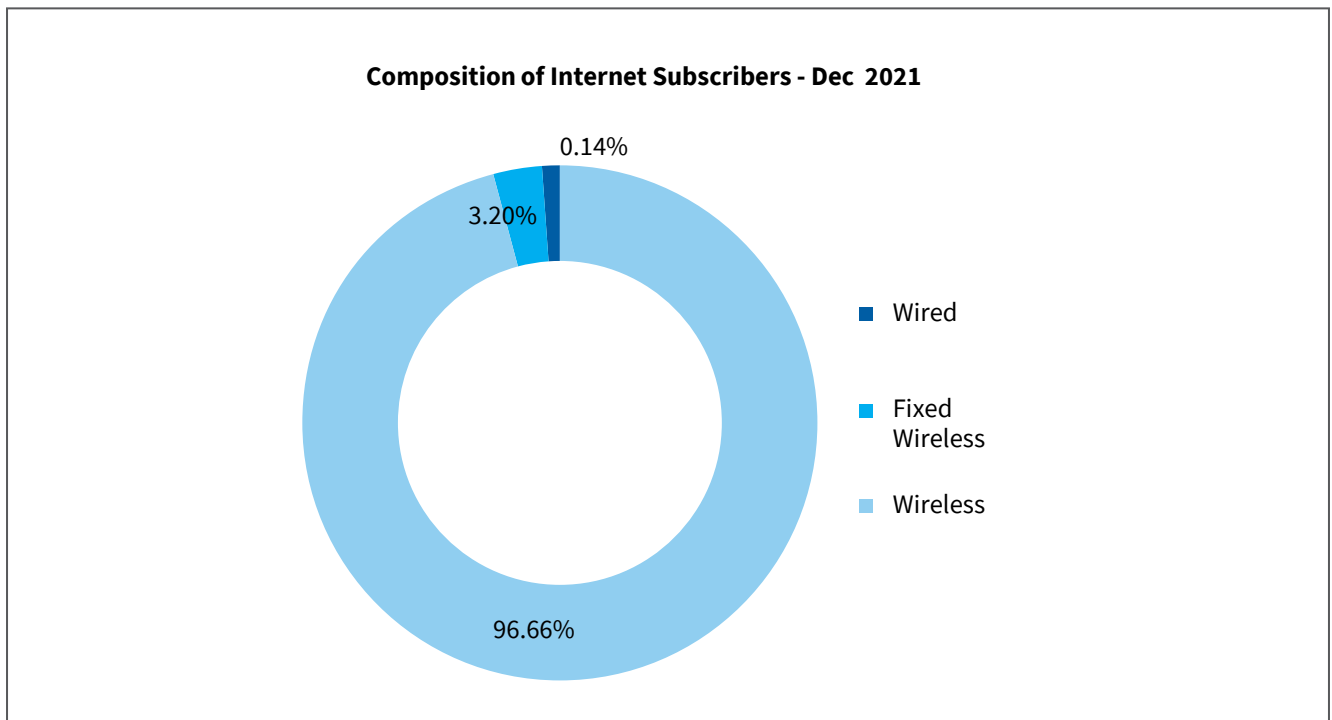
E. All India Total & Wireless Internet Subscribers



Source: TRAI

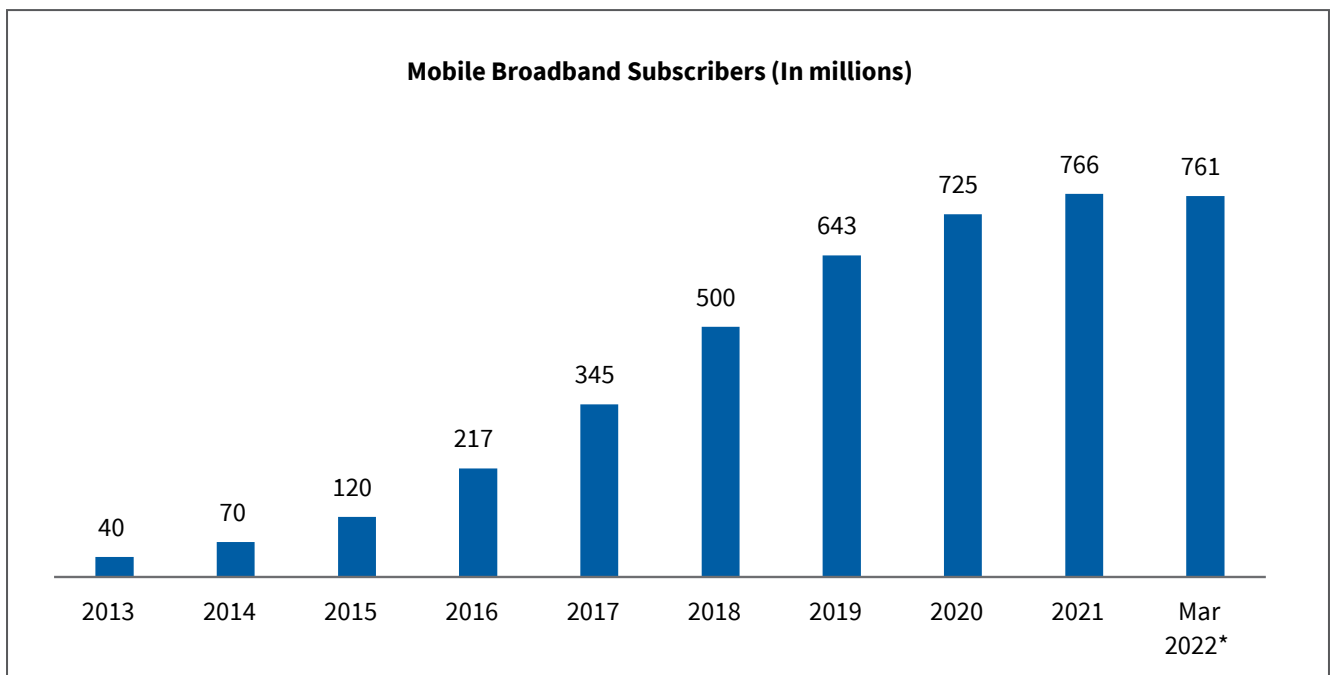
Note : Figures are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

F. Composition of Internet Subscribers - Dec 2021



Source: TRAI

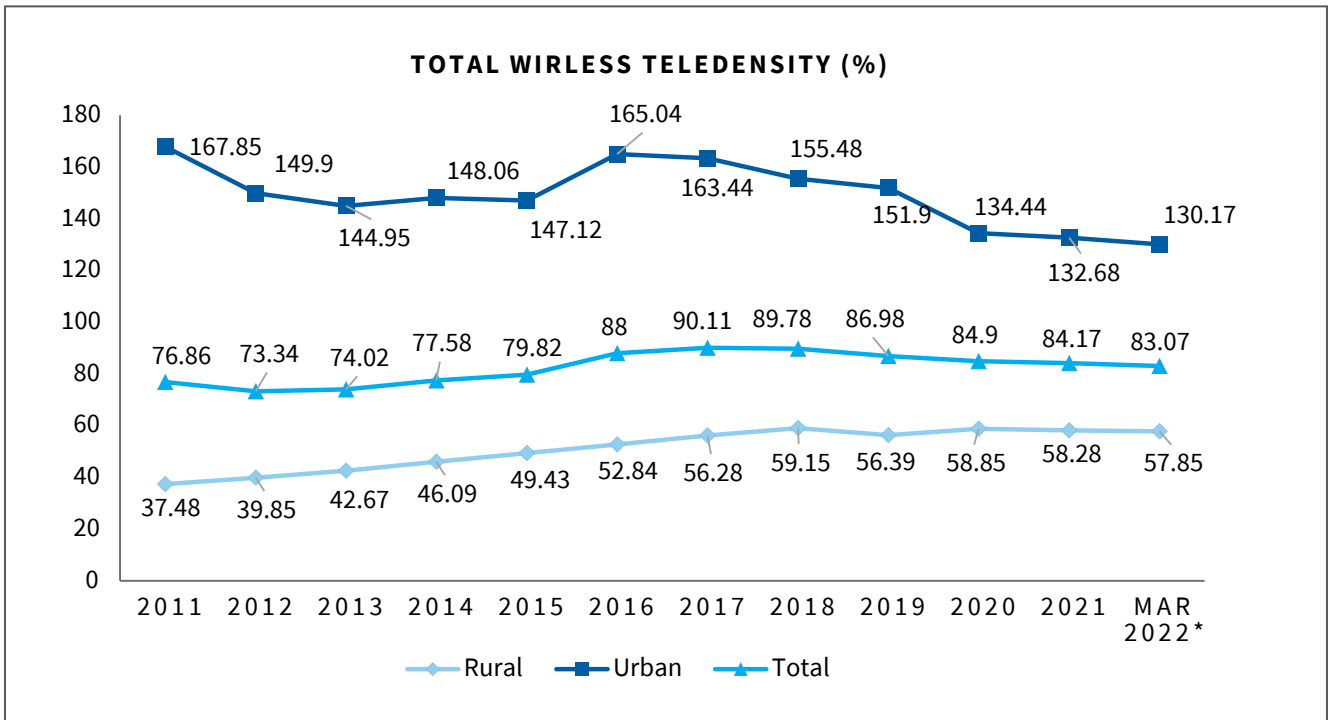
G. Mobile Broadband Subscribers (In millions)



Source: TRAI

Note : 2013-2021 data is as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

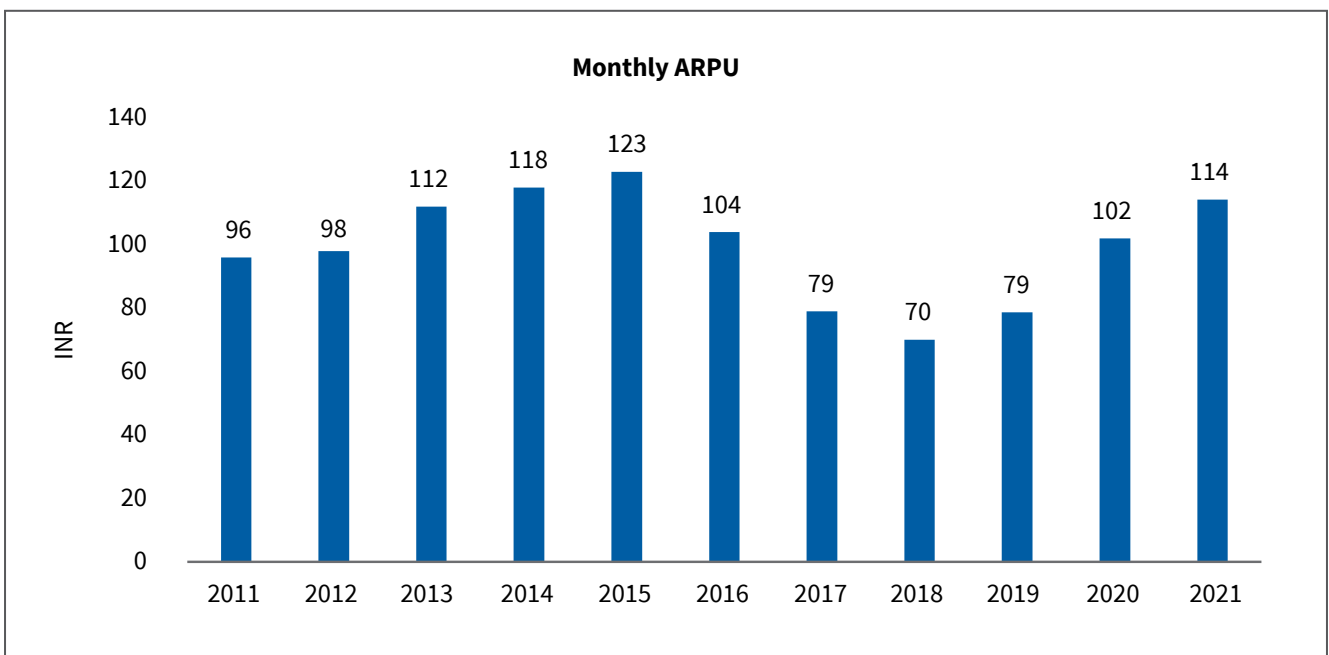
H. Total Wireless Tele-density (%)



Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

I. Monthly Average Revenue Per User (ARPU)

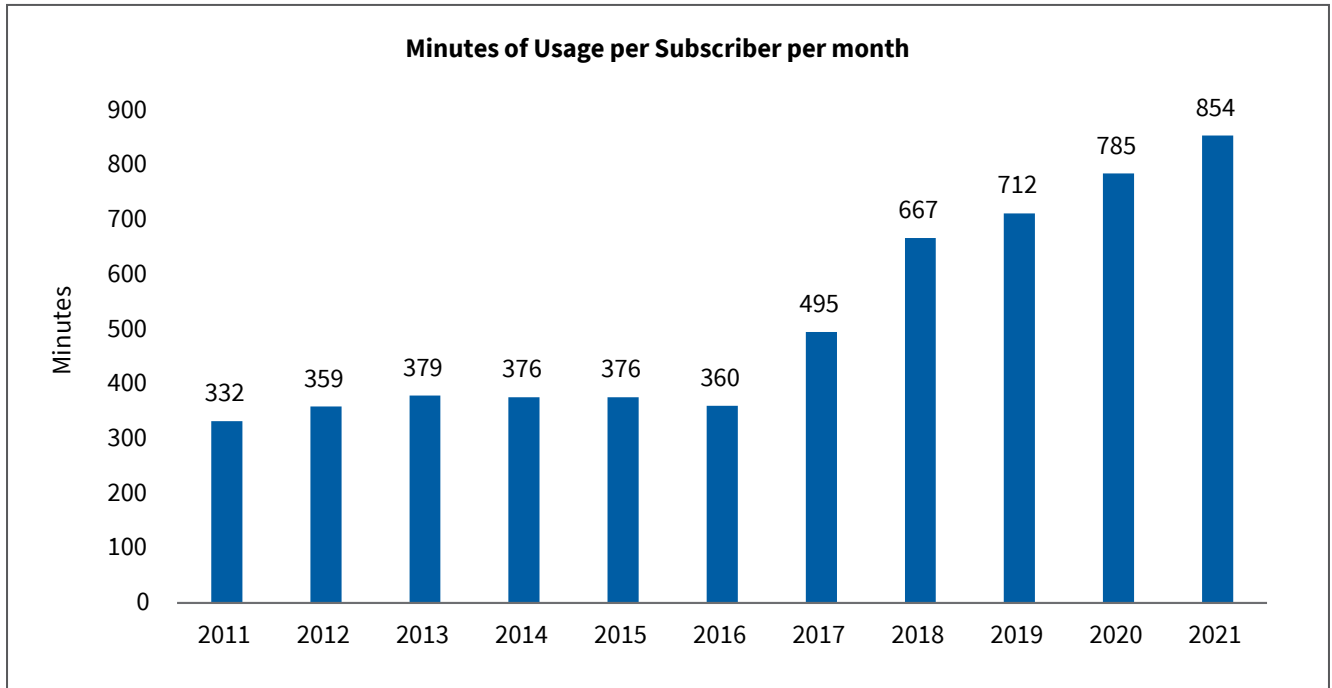


Source: TRAI

Note: Figures are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

TRAI Excludes the IUC and Roaming Settlement Charges while calculating the ARPU
Wireless ARPU

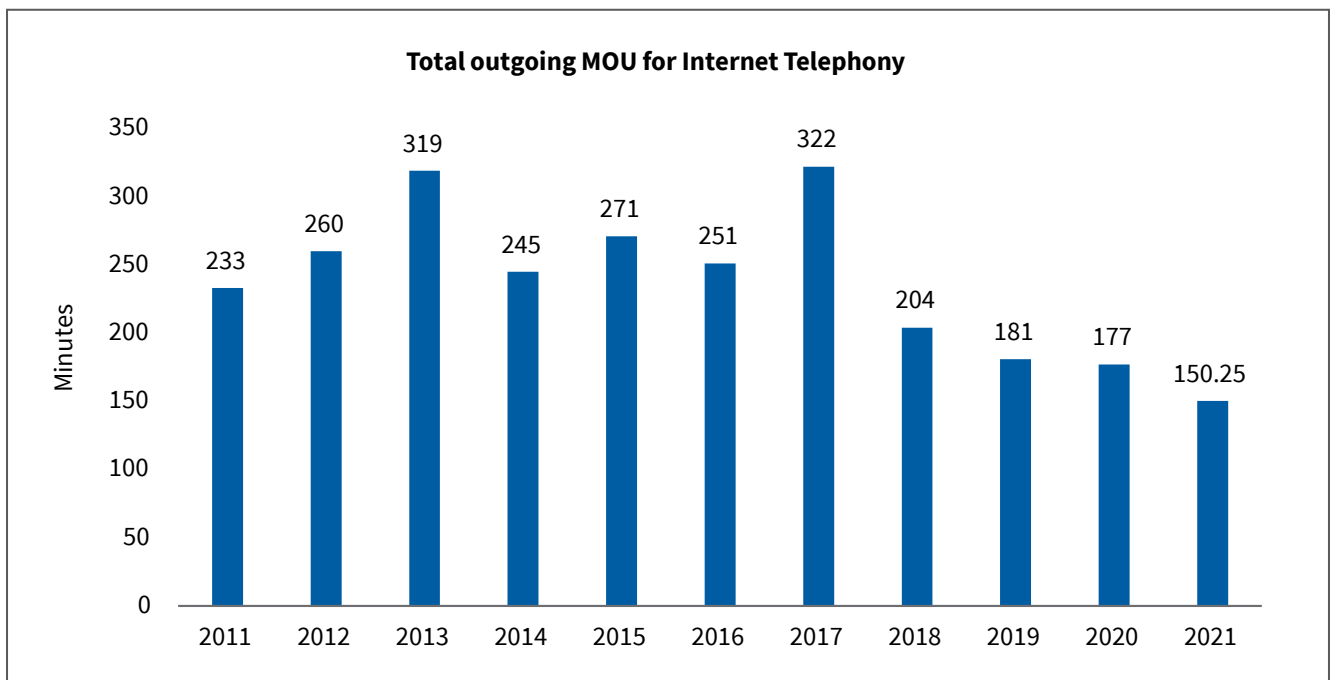
J. Minutes of Usage (MOU) per subscriber per month - Wireless Service (GSM including LTE)



Source: TRAI PIR

Note: Figures are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

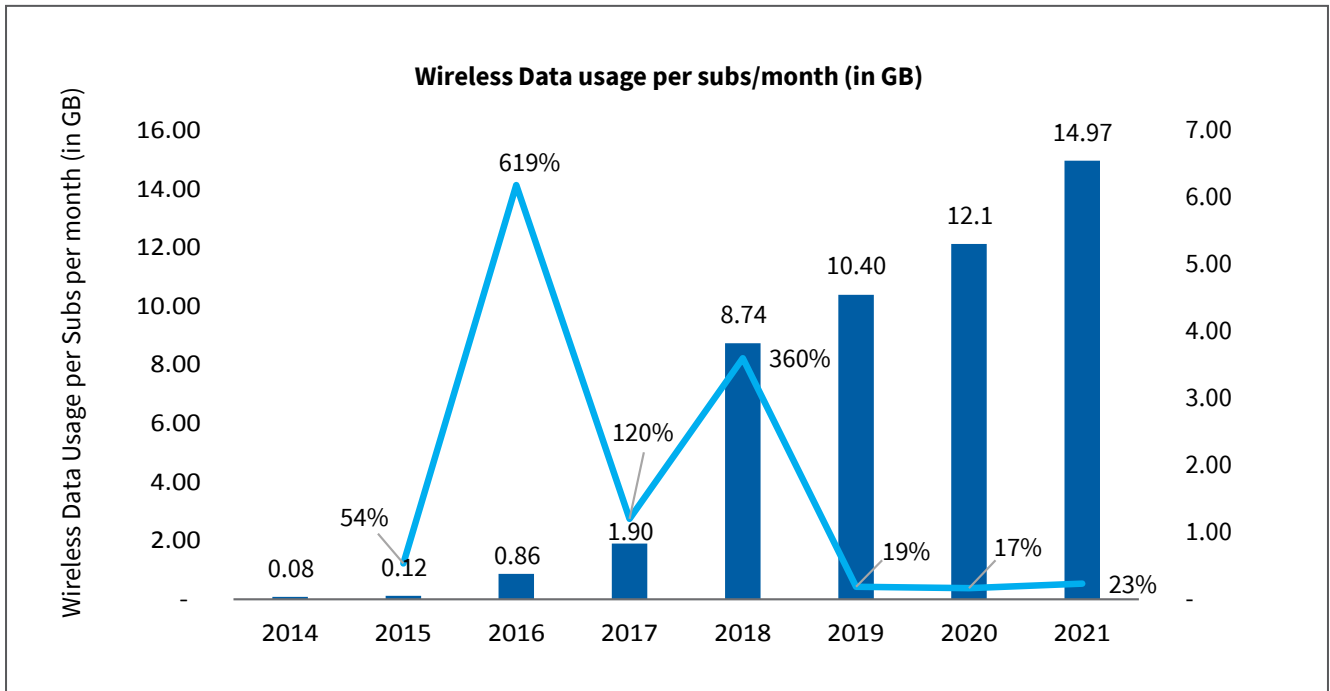
K. Total outgoing MOU for Internet Telephony



Source: TRAI PIR

Note: Figures are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

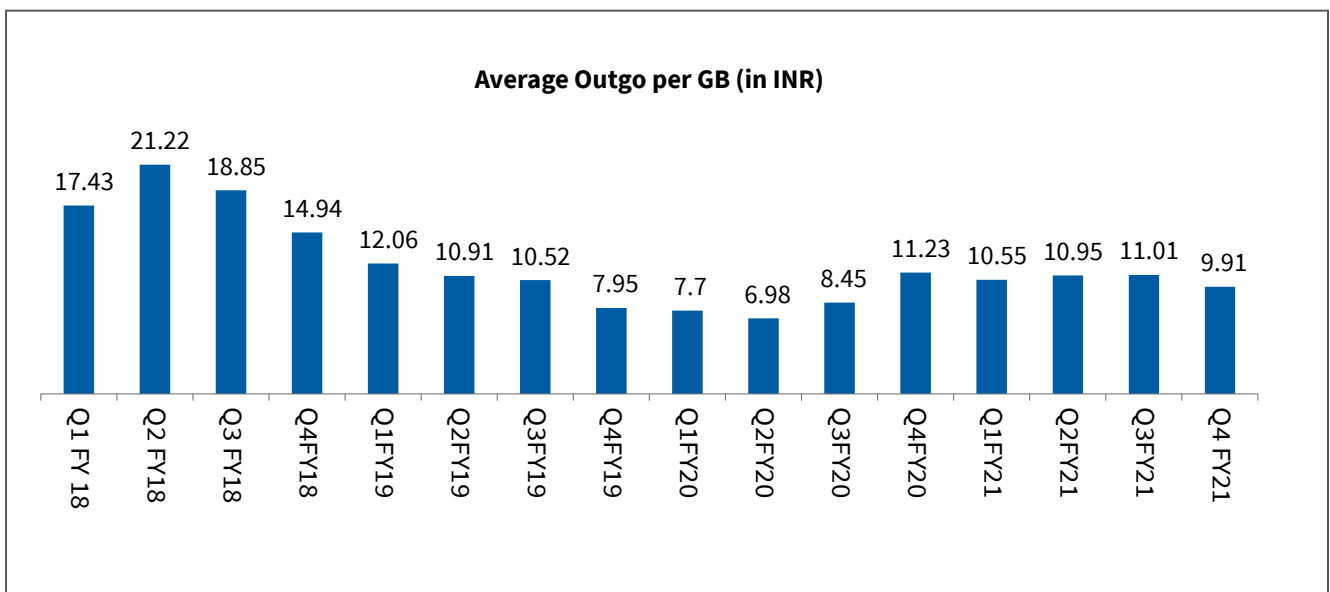
L. Wireless Data Usage Per Subscriber Per Month



Source: TRAI PIR

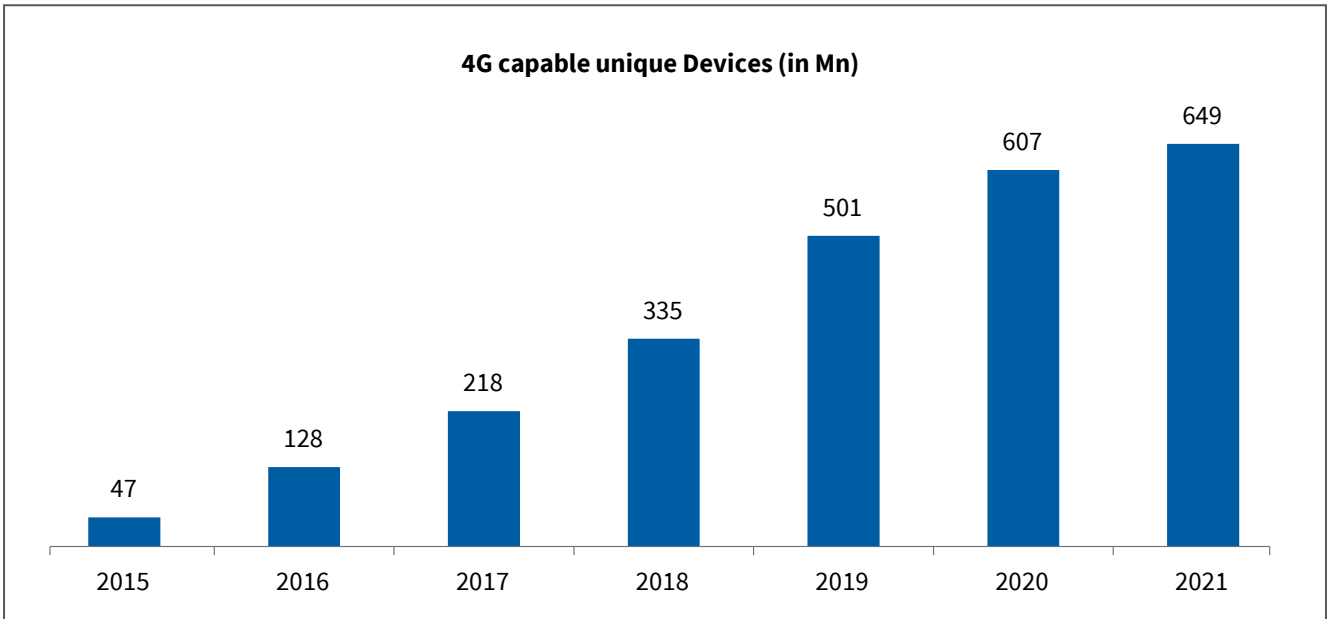
Note: Figures are as of December 31st, as per TRAI Reports

M. Average Outgo per GB (in INR)



Source: TRAI PIR

N. 4G capable unique Devices (in Mn)

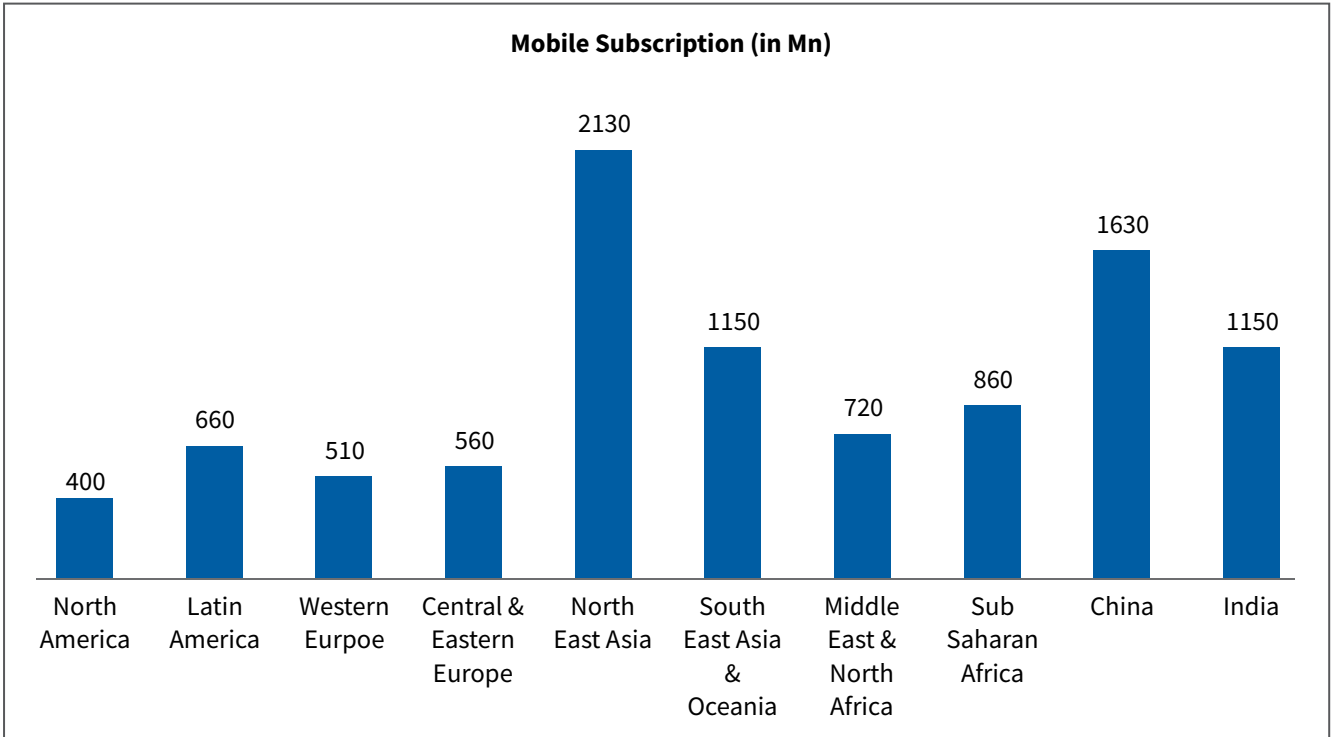


Source: Nokia MBit Reports 2022



08 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS (ASIA PACIFIC REGION)

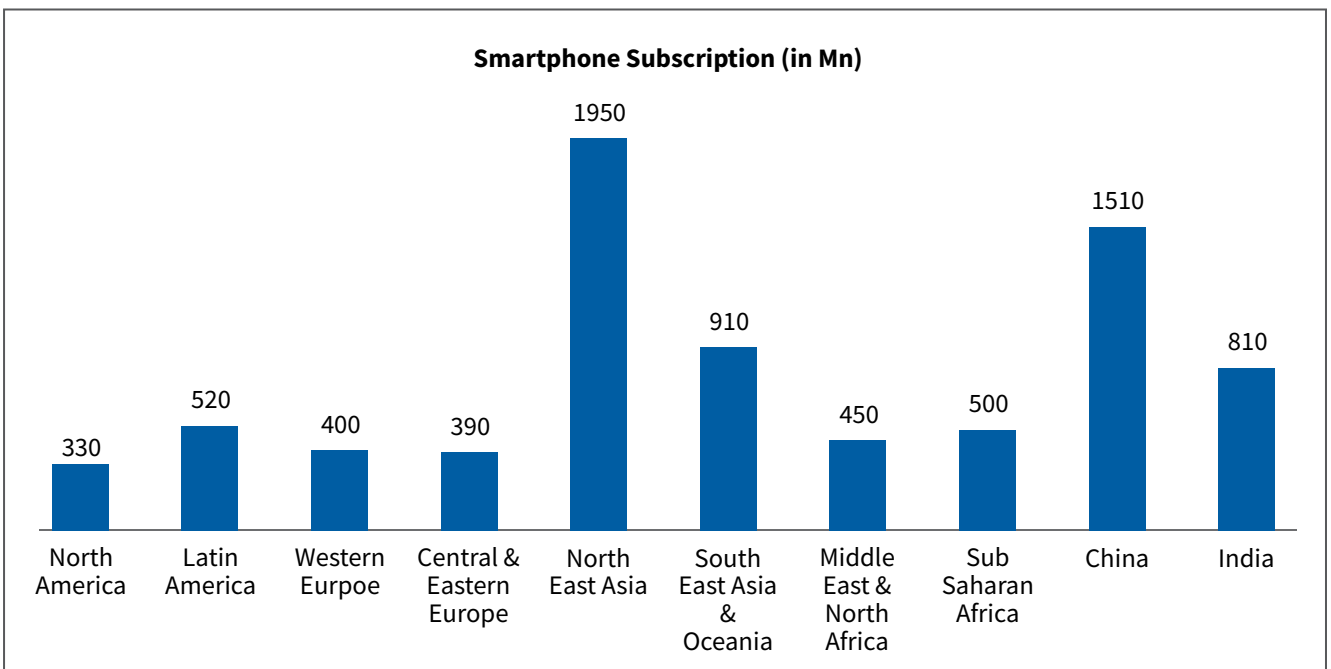
A. Mobile Subscription



Source: <https://www.ericsson.com/4ad7e9/assets/local/reports-papers/mobility-report/documents/2021/ericsson-mobility-report-november-2021.pdf>

* India includes India , Nepal, Bhutan

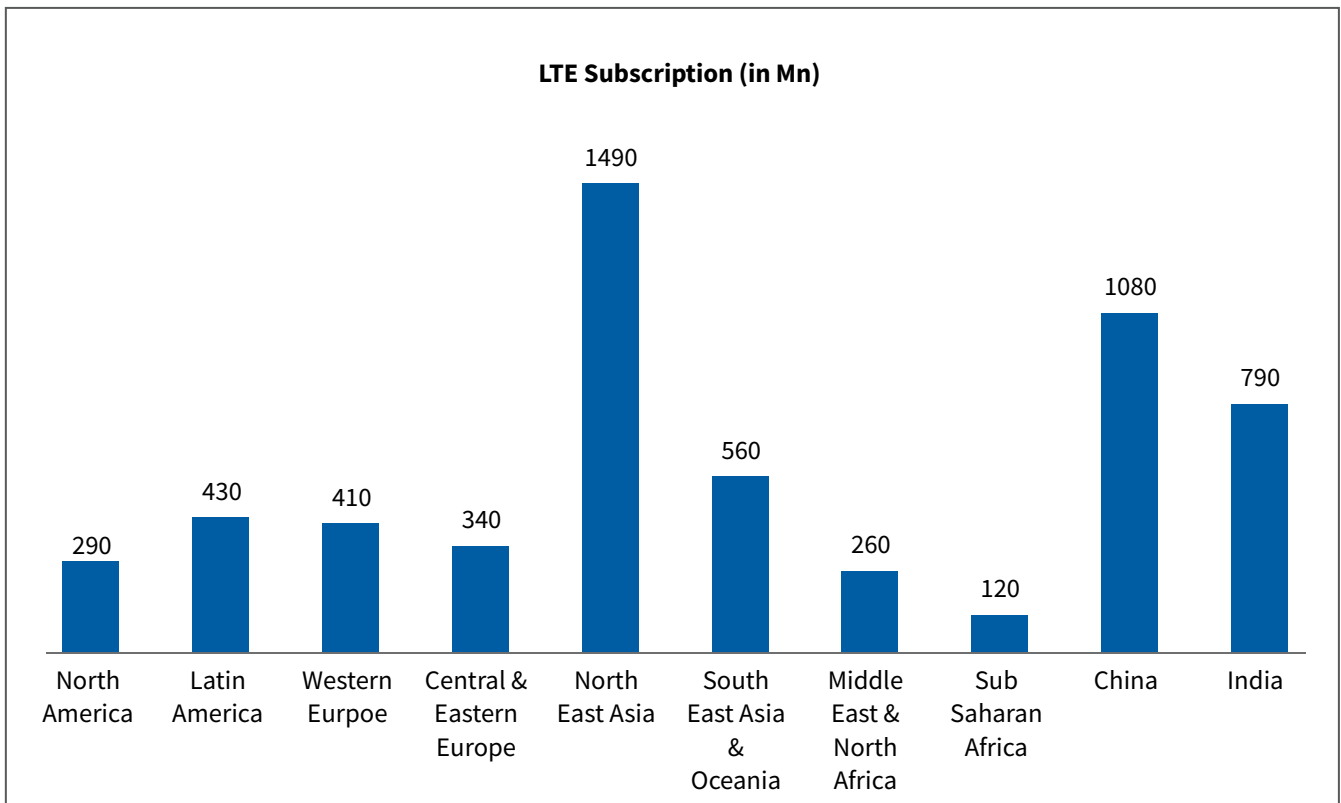
B. Smartphone Subscription



Source: <https://www.ericsson.com/4ad7e9/assets/local/reports-papers/mobility-report/documents/2021/ericsson-mobility-report-november-2021.pdf>

* India includes India , Nepal, Bhutan

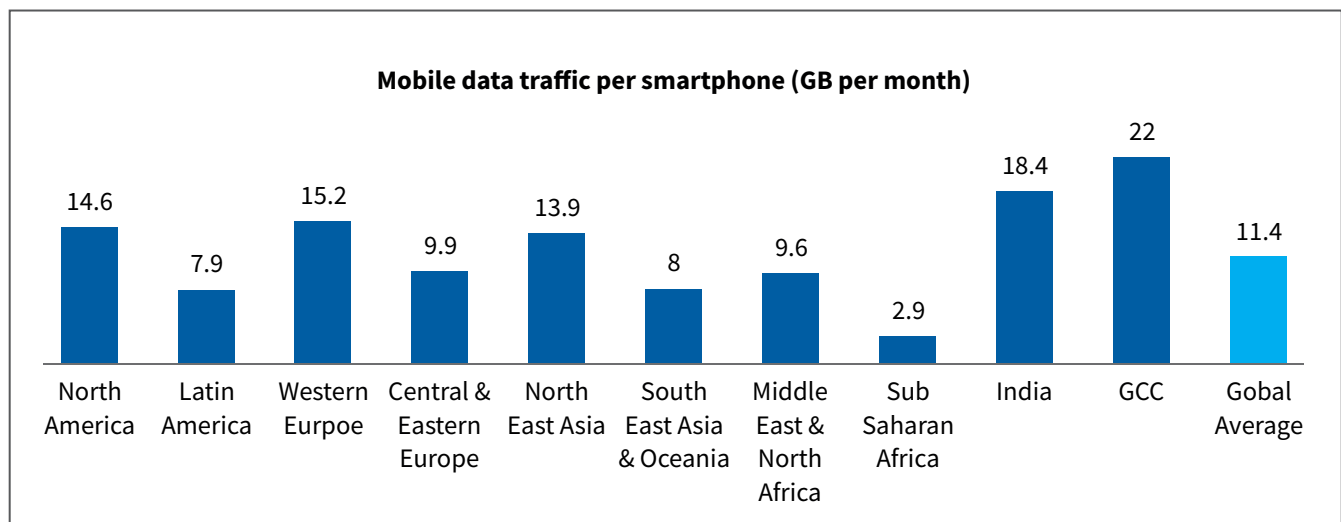
C. LTE Subscription



Source: <https://www.ericsson.com/4ad7e9/assets/local/reports-papers/mobility-report/documents/2021/ericsson-mobility-report-november-2021.pdf>

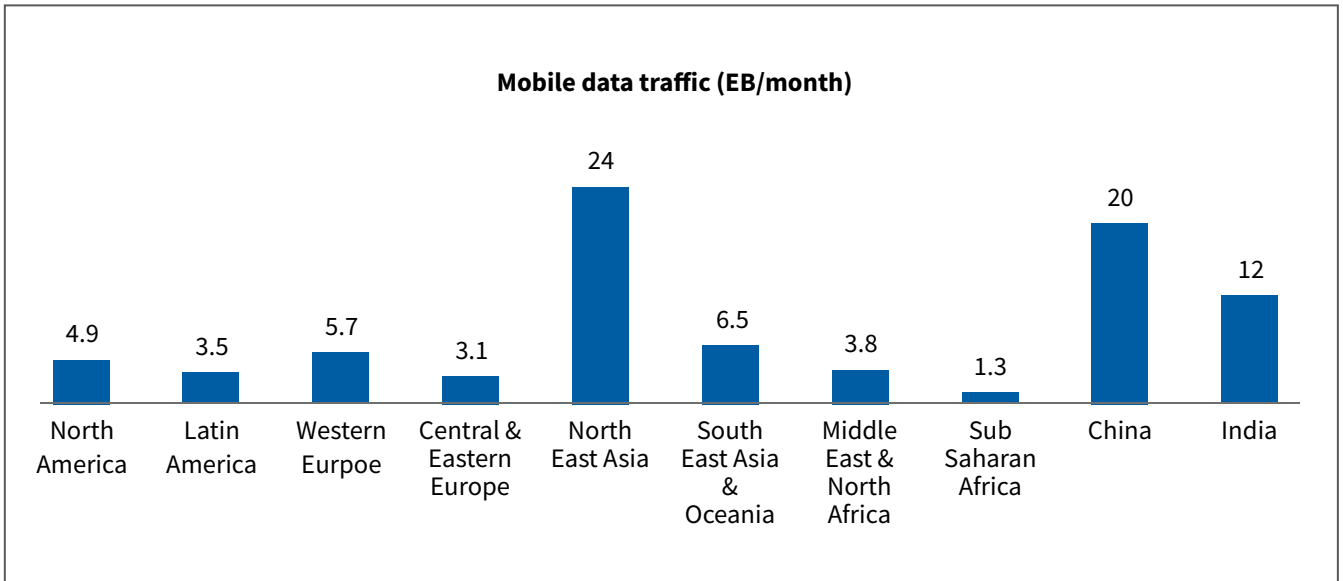
* India includes India , Nepal, Bhutan

D. Global mobile data traffic per smart phone(GB per month)



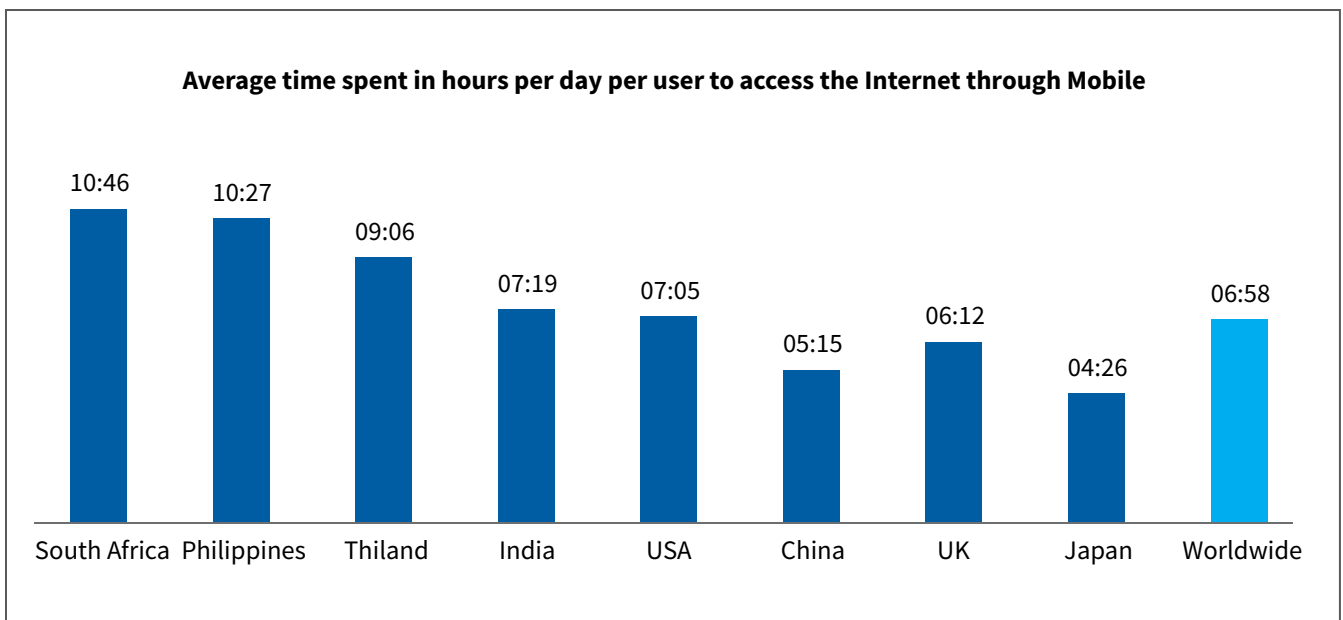
Source: <https://www.ericsson.com/4ad7e9/assets/local/reports-papers/mobility-report/documents/2021/ericsson-mobility-report-november-2021.pdf>

E. Global mobile data traffic (EB per month)



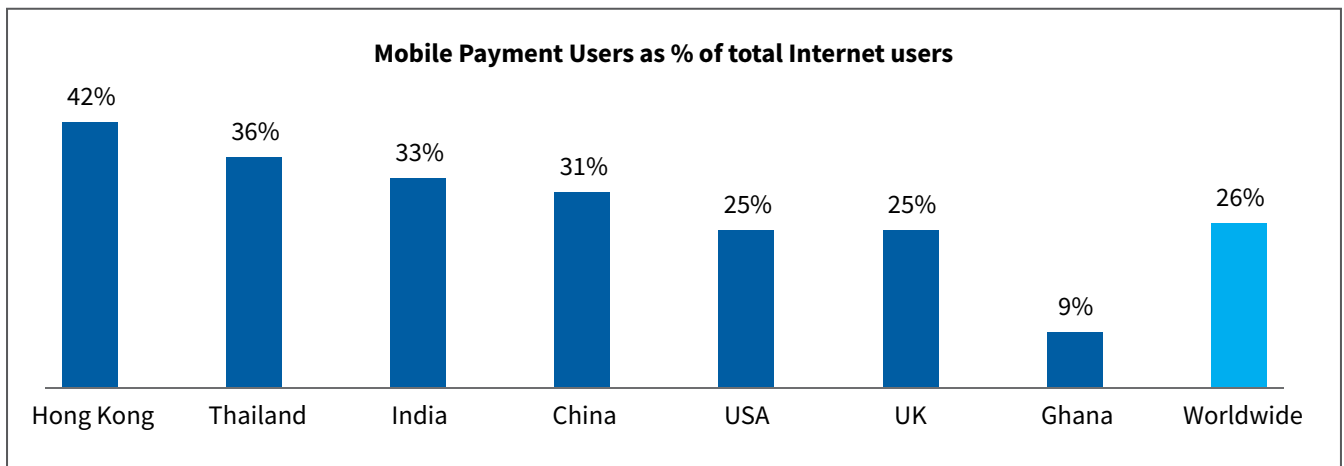
Source: <https://www.ericsson.com/4ad7e9/assets/local/reports-papers/mobility-report/documents/2021/ericsson-mobility-report-november-2021.pdf>
 Source: Ericsson Mobility Report, (November 2020),

F. Time per day spent using Mobile Internet per User



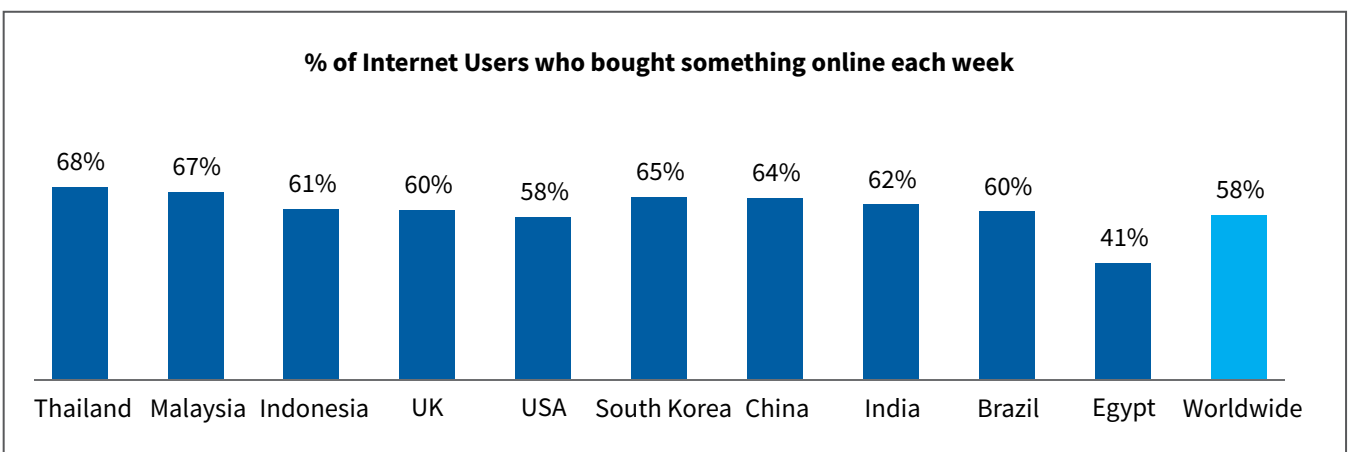
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

G. Percentage of Internet users who use Mobile Payment Services by country



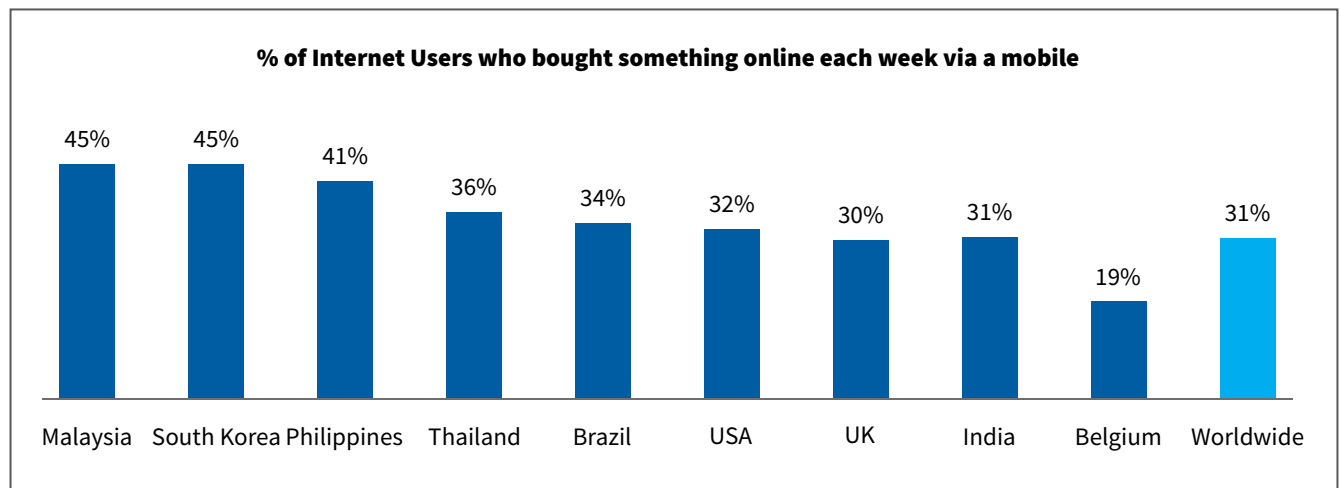
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

H. Weekly online purchase



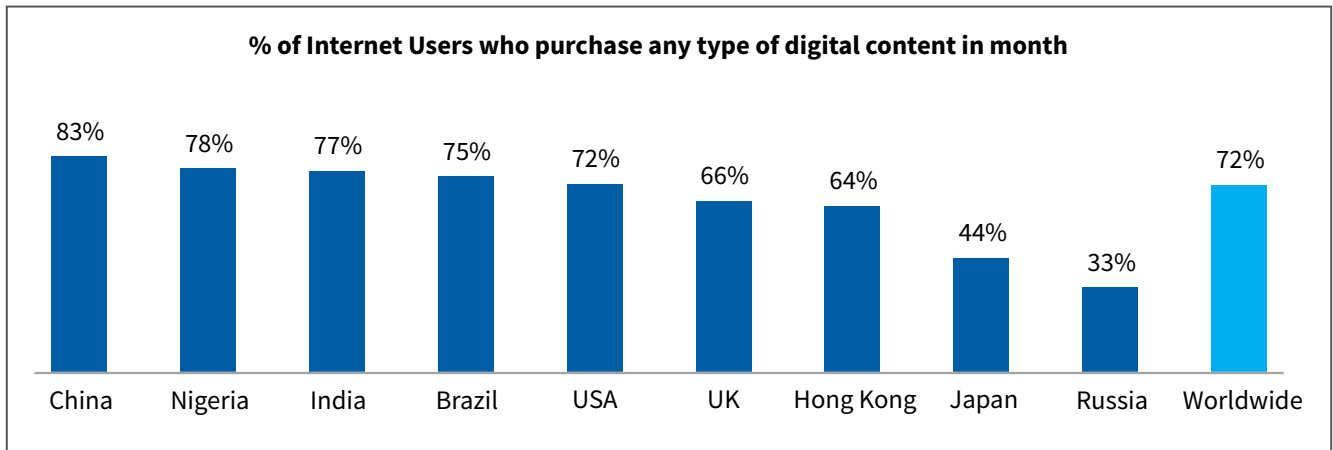
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report> Note : 2013-

I. Weekly Mobile Commerce Purchase



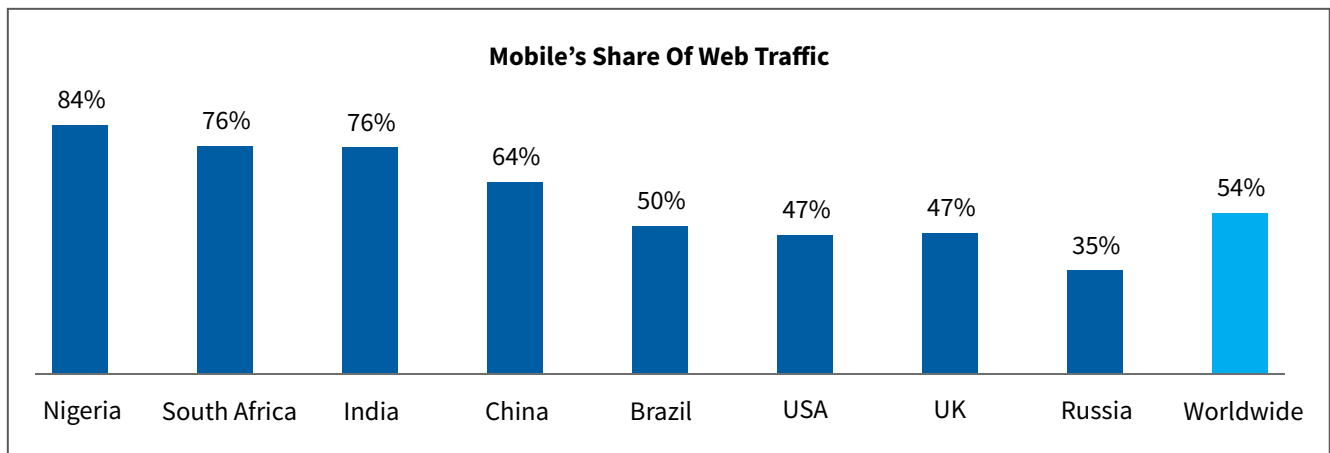
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

J. Paying for Digital Content



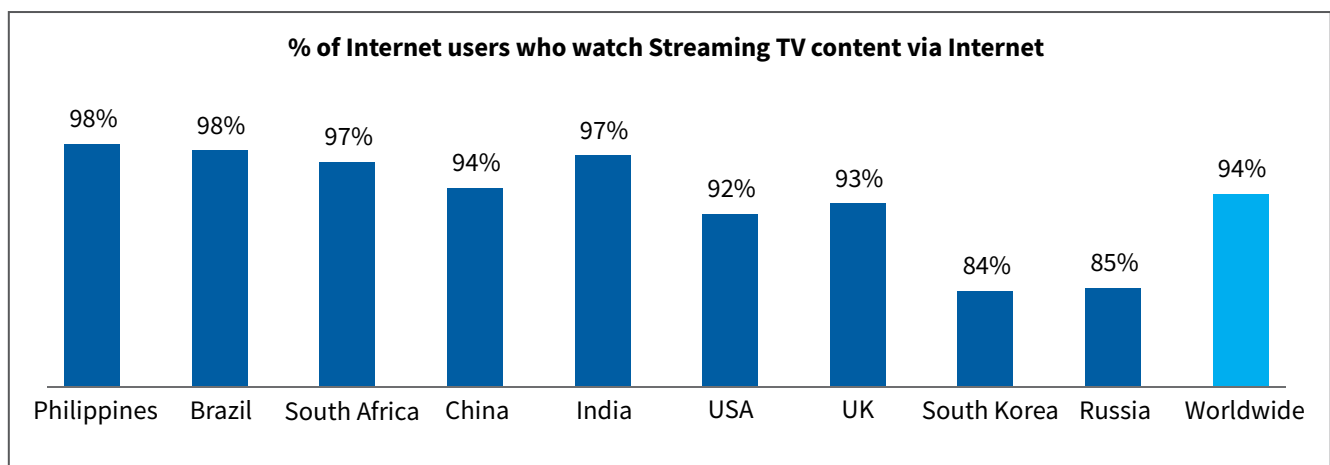
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

K. Mobile's Share OF Web Traffic



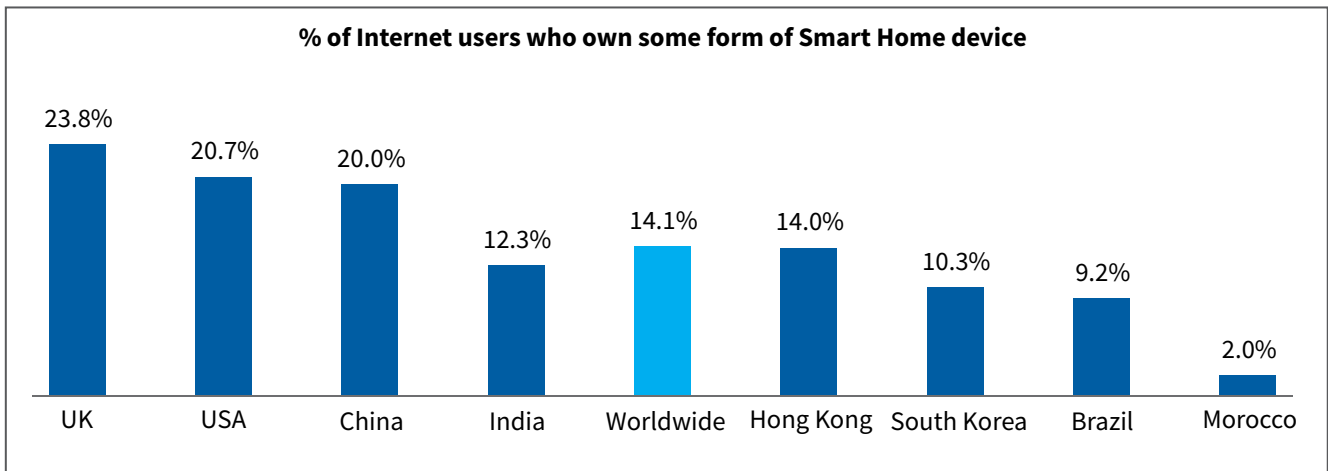
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

L. Streaming TV Content Via the Internet



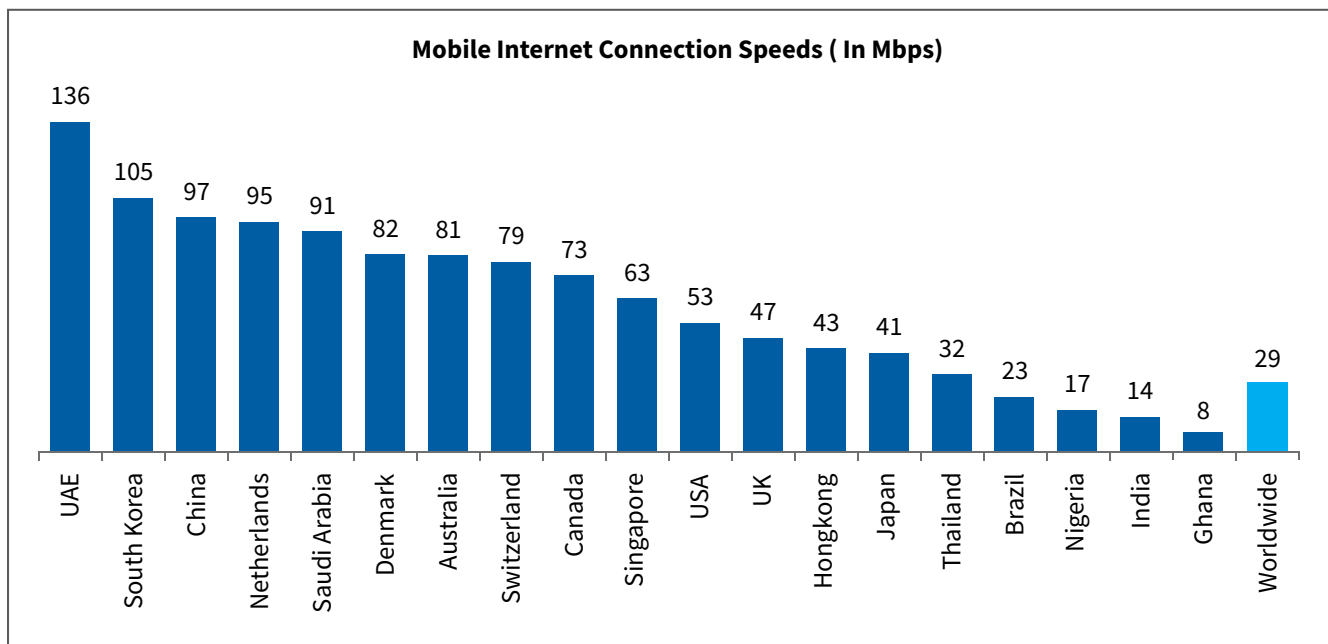
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

M. Smart Home Device Ownership



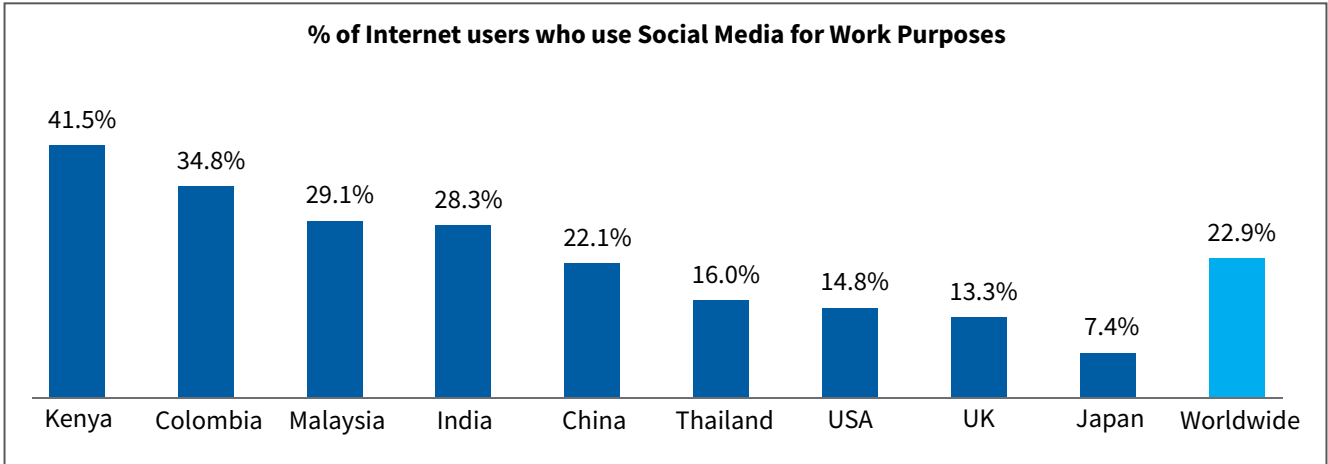
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

N. Global Mobile internet speed - Jan 2022



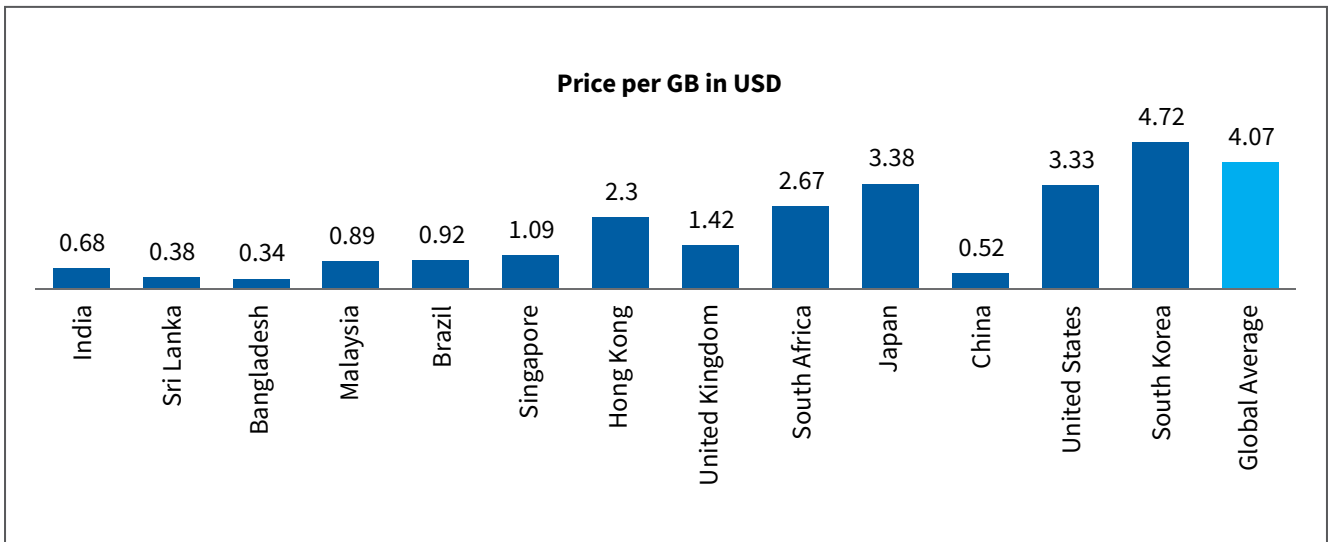
Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

O. Use Of Social Media for Work Activities



Source: <https://hootsuite.widen.net/s/gqprmtzq6g/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

P. Price per GB in USD



Source: <https://www.cable.co.uk/mobiles/worldwide-data-pricing/>

09

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2020-2021



1. On COAI's request and coordinated joint efforts of the industry, the Track Rent Charges have been taken off by the Govt of Tamil Nadu. It is estimated that there will be savings of approximately 15 Cr annually to the telecom industry.
2. Based on COAI's request, the State Government of Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Odisha issued positive directions to concerned Deputy Commissioners/ District Collectors / Superintendent of Police to be vigilant and take necessary action in safeguarding the Telecom / Digital Infrastructure in their jurisdiction.
3. Based on COAI's request, positive Directions were issued by Haryana, UP Police, Gujarat, & Rajasthan to "Demystify the Misinformation being spread linking 5G technology and testing with the COVID-19 pandemic".
4. On COAI's request, positive letters were issued by Jharkhand, J&K, Ladakh, and Madhya Pradesh to take suitable action on providing priority Electricity connections to the telecom industry.
5. On COAI's request, Govt. of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Goa, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh categorized telecom warriors as frontline workers and helped them to get the vaccination on priority.
6. On COAI's request, North DMC has withdrawn its regressive order dated 20.09.2021 on 08.03.2022 that was putting restrictions on the placement of CoW across the area covered under the municipality.
7. On COAI's request, all 3 MCDs of Delhi i.e North DMC (@INR 684/- per mtr), SDMC (@ INR 881/- per mtr), EDMC (@ INR 636/- per meter) have reduced their Wayleave charges to INR 200/- per meter.
8. On COAI's submission done on 04.02.2021 and follow-ups done thereafter, South DMC issued a circular dated 08.03.2022 to accept the fee for permissions of pole sites for the period before 01.01.2016 @Rs. 20,000/- per pole /per operator for five years.
9. On COAI's request for allocation of street furniture to support the speedy roll-out of infrastructure for 5G technology, a Task Force in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh is formed for the Utilization of Govt. Infrastructure and Street Furniture at Nominal rent for rolling out 5G Services and for Aerial OFC.

10. In Madhya Pradesh, charges for using Poles were increased suddenly by five times thus making INR 500/ per pole per year. On the request made by COAI, the charges were reduced to INR 200/ per pole as per G.O. dated 22-Oct 2021. thus, saving approximately INR 10 Lakhs as an industry.
11. Based on COAI's request, various submissions, and follow-ups, the RoW policy of Tamil Nadu got notified on 25th Jan 2022.
12. Based on COAI's request, various submissions, and follow-ups, the RoW policy of Ladakh RoW Policy got notified on 05th Jul 2021.
13. Based on various submissions and follow-ups done with DoT and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), MoD has formed a committee to see the issues raised by COAI regarding RoW policy of MoD. COAI is the member in this committee.
14. Consequently, to efforts by COAI, the Govt. of Rajasthan via its order dated 01.02.22 approved reduction in the following charges:-
 - ⊙ laying of Aerial OFC to INR 1,000/- per pole annually, thus saving approximately 13 Cr per month for this financial year the same year saving approximately 6.5 Cr per month shall apply in future too. (The number of Poles are approximate counts based on some inputs by members and thus savings calculations)
 - ⊙ Manhole to INR 2,000/-per manhole/chamber at District Headquarters & INR 1,000/-per manhole/chamber in other towns. Thus, saving approximately 2 to 2.5 Cr in this Financial year.
 - ⊙ Thus, the approximately saving may be around 15 to 16 Cr in this last financial year.
15. Clarification was issued by Himachal Pradesh IT Dept. on 21st Feb 2022 regarding administrative charges of Rs 1000 per KM only for laying of Underground Telecom infrastructure. Earlier Charges were charged between Rs 1500-2700 per meter by Gram Panchayat, Shimla Municipal Corporations, NHAI etc.
16. On COAI request, a meeting was held on 18th March 2022 with DGF & SS (MoEF&CC) with TSPs and COAI to resolve telecom issues and clearing RoW pendency. DG (MoeF&CC) agreed to align the forest Policy with RoW Rules 2016 and also clear all the pendency
17. COAI coordinated with DoT for the development and the launch of 'Gati Shakti Sanchaar) - Centralised RoW Portal.
18. On COAI's request, RoW Portals were launched & trial sessions were arranged for the industry for Nagaland (15.03.2022), Mizoram (08.02.2022) Manipur (01.02.22), Meghalaya (13.12.21) & Tripura (01.12.21)
19. Telecom Reforms

Telecom reforms are announced by Union Cabinet on 15th Sep 2021. Nine structural reforms and Five procedural reforms, plus relief measures for the Telecom Service Providers announced are as mentioned below:



STRUCTURAL REFORMS

- i. Rationalization of Adjusted Gross Revenue: Non-telecom revenue will be excluded on prospective basis from the definition of AGR.
- ii. Bank Guarantees (BGs) rationalized: Huge reduction in BG requirements (80%) against License Fee (LF) and other similar Levies. No requirements for multiple BGs in different Licenced Service Areas (LSAs) regions in the country. Instead, One BG will be enough.
- iii. Interest rates rationalized/ Penalties removed: From 1st October, 2021, Delayed payments of License Fee (LF)/Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) will attract interest rate of SBI's MCLR plus 2% instead of MCLR plus 4%; interest compounded annually instead of monthly; penalty and interest on penalty removed.
- iv. For Auctions held henceforth, no BGs will be required to secure instalment payments. Industry has matured and the past practice of BG is no longer required.
- v. Spectrum Tenure: In future Auctions, tenure of spectrum increased from 20 to 30 years.
- vi. Surrender of spectrum will be permitted after 10 years for spectrum acquired in the future auctions.
- vii. No Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for spectrum acquired in future spectrum auctions.
- viii. Spectrum sharing encouraged- additional SUC of 0.5% for spectrum sharing removed.
- ix. To encourage investment, 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) under automatic route permitted in Telecom Sector. All safeguards will apply.

PROCEDURAL REFORMS

- i. Auction calendar fixed - Spectrum auctions to be normally held in the last quarter of every financial year.
- ii. Ease of doing business promoted - cumbersome requirement of licenses under 1953 Customs Notification for wireless equipment removed. Replaced with self-declaration.
- iii. Know Your Customers (KYC) reforms: Self-KYC (App based) permitted. E-KYC rate revised to only One Rupee. Shifting from Prepaid to Post-paid and vice-versa will not require fresh KYC.
- iv. Paper Customer Acquisition Forms (CAF) will be replaced by digital storage of data. Nearly 300-400 crore paper CAFs lying in various warehouses of TSPs will not be required. Warehouse audit of CAF will not be required.
- v. SACFA clearance for telecom towers eased. DOT will accept data on a portal based on self-declaration basis. Portals of other Agencies (such as Civil Aviation) will be linked with DOT Portal.

Addressing Liquidity requirements of Telecom Service Providers

- i. Moratorium/Deferment of upto four years in annual payments of dues arising out of the AGR judgement, with however, by protecting the Net Present Value (NPV) of the due amounts being protected.
- ii. Moratorium/Deferment on due payments of spectrum purchased in past auctions (excluding the auction of 2021) for upto four years with NPV protected at the interest rate stipulated in the respective auctions.
- iii. Option to the TSPs to pay the interest amount arising due to the said deferment of payment by way of equity.
- iv. At the option of the Government, to convert the due amount pertaining to the said deferred payment by way of equity at the end of the Moratorium/Deferment period, guidelines for which will be finalized by the Ministry of Finance.

20. Adoption of Standards for 5G in India

COAI submitted that the Government must continue with its technology-neutral approach adopted till date. However, efforts may be made for global harmonization of 5Gi standards by making it part of 3GPP, to ensure early adoption by operators without any policy intervention and all stakeholders can reap the benefits of economies of scale. 5Gi has been officially closed. This will be merged with 3GPP-Rel 17 standards. TEC will adopt 3GPP Rel-15 & 3GPP Rel-16, as national standards for India.

21. Consumer Education Workshops

Based on COAI request, TRAI granted an extension to conduct Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode till 30th June 2022.

22. Mobile Number Portability

DoT issued instruction for Mobile Number Portability and Roll back of the Location Routing Number-regarding on 25th Nov 2021

23. Requirement of end-user list for issuing of mobile connections to bulk connection

DoT issued instructions on Nov 2, 2021. Requirement of end user list has been exempted for Law Enforcement Agencies, Defence Forces and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

24. SACFA Application through Saral Sanchar

Post Cabinet approval, SACFA application process has been simplified. All SACFA applications will be online through the Saral Sanchar portal and they will be approved on self-certification. Deemed approval provision also made for sites not cleared by JCES & AAI on a timely basis.

25. Simplification of SACFA for Small Cells

DoT has simplified the SACFA procedure for Small Cells. The requirement for a formal application for SACFA processing is done away with for Low Power BTSs; however, the TSPs rolling out the same shall register the details such as Geo-coordinates and technical parameters of such sites in the Saral Sanchar Portal. The registration fees is RS. 100/- per Small Cell.

26. PTP PMP Microwave Fixed Radio Systems – Safety requirements

COAI requested to delete the requirement for compliance to “IT Equipment Safety for Radio Products - EN/IEC 60215:2016. Annex-A3 from PTP PMP Microwave Fixed Radio Systems ER (ER No. TEC56422005). This ER covers all types of Point to Point and Point to Multi-point Microwave Fixed Radio Systems. International Standard - EN/IEC 60215:2016 does not apply to battery-powered transmitters or to radio base stations and fixed terminal stations for wireless telecommunication. However, this ER for PTP and PMP equipment is also getting covered under other ERs released by TEC for compliances and safety purposes, hence there is no requirement for this ER separately. The same has been accepted by TEC.

27. DoT issued a notice to all e-commerce companies on “Illegal Facilitation and Sale of Wireless Jammers on On-line Platforms”

DoT issued a notice to all e-commerce platforms on “Illegal Facilitation and Sale of Wireless Jammers on On-line Platforms” on January 21, 2022. DoT informed that such facilitation/sale of by the online platforms as well as any other off-line dealer/seller for general consumption will be considered illegal. Jammers may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances only when authorized by Secretary (Security), Cabinet secretariat as per guidelines issued in this regard.

28. Extension and amendments in Equipment Labelling Guidelines and Requirements on certified telecom products under MTCTE

COAI submitted that sudden changes under regulatory requirements of equipment labelling of telecom products would require modification and overhauling of the previous logo designs. Such change in label design will be global and will have to be implemented across all production lines. This substitution of labels will lead to the piling up of finished product inventories with old Labels, presents an operational difficulty in practice, and has huge logistical and cost implications for our

members. COAI’s request regarding extension and amendments to equipment labelling was successful.

29. Exemption of 9 kHz to 30 MHz from license rules 2021 for devices used for inductive applications

COAI submitted that the ETSI standard ETSI EN 300 330 allows the operations of Inductive Loop systems in the frequency range of 9 kHz to 30 MHz without licensing requirements. The same has also been adopted in multiple regions across the world including Europe, Asia Pacific, North America, Latin America, China, and the Middle East. Further, many countries also allow the Inductive Applications to co-exist with other assigned applications working in the same frequency ranges on account of their low power operations which do not cause interference in any way to the other applications operating in the same range. COAI’s request regarding exemption was accepted and got published in the Gazette notification.

30. Based on COAI request, TRAI granted an extension to conduct Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode till 30th June 2022.



31. DoT issued instruction for Mobile Number Portability and Roll back of the Location Routing Number-regarding on 25th Nov 2021.
32. Regulations for Vessel Operation in India - Clarification(s) regarding activities relating to cable repair/installation operations carried out in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

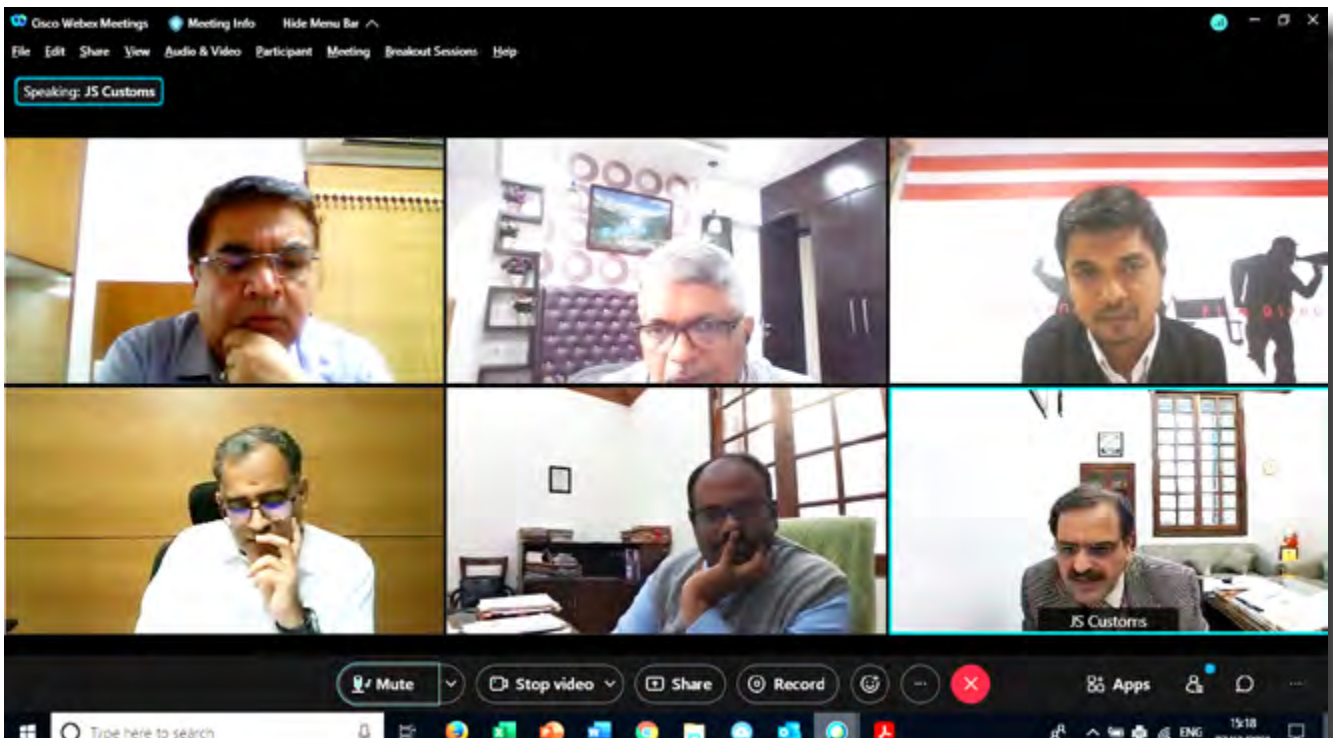
In March 2021, Custom authorities had impounded the cable repairing vessel for almost 40 days without any show cause notice operating within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Customs Department was taking the view that bringing of goods into the Indian Customs Waters qualifies as an import into India.

Various representations were made to PMO, MoF and to DoT for seeking clarification(s) regarding activities relating to cable repair/installation operations carried out in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). 60-70% of India's westward sea marine cables were down, and we were at high risk to ensure connectivity.



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

Ministry of Finance vide letter dated 20-01-2022 has issued the clarification. This is a big relief to the industry.



33. Faceless assessment by Customs

Various discussions were held with the concerned officers with regard to issues faced under Faceless assessment by Customs. We are happy to inform you that Vide Circular Number 14/2021 Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC) have addressed the following key issues.

- ⦿ Enhancement of Facility Levels

- ⦿ Expediting assessment process
- ⦿ Re-organization of FAGs
- ⦿ Automated generation of examination orders.
- ⦿ Anonymized escalation

In addition to the above points, for chapter 5C (8517-8531) which is related to "Communication and related equipment", number of Nodal Commissioner and FAG from Zones have

been reduced from 10 to 7. Government has removed Kolkata, Mumbai Zone 1 and Thiruvananthapuram



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

We had requested MoF that in view of genuine hardships and difficulties being faced by trade and industry, this issue need to be resolved. The Ministry of Finance has issued clarification and resolved this issue. This is a big relief and will help in ease doing compliances.

34. GST – Procedural issues in Compliance – Clarification by MoF

Representation on key issues and suggestions of Members were made to GST Council and to the concerned senior officers in the MoF / DoT.

Issue resolved by the Government

As per CGST Rules, original invoice reference is mandatory to be captured on credit notes/ debit notes. However, in case of B2C, if taxpayer tries to generate credit note using IRP portal, original invoice details do not get printed and resultantly non-compliant credit note gets generated.



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

Above will help in saving IT upgradation and administrative cost and would ease doing compliance.

35. Telecom Reforms – Custom Notification dated 25-09-1953

- ⦿ Major Reforms in Telecom Sector announced by the Government on September 15, 2021.
- ⦿ Requirement of licenses under 1953 Customs Notification for wireless

equipment removed and replaced with self-declaration”.

On October 21, 2021, DoT has issued guidelines regarding Import of Wireless equipment by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) based on self-declaration



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

Ministry of Finance has issues instructions on 23-11-2021 w.r.t. import of wireless equipment's by TSPs based on self-declaration. This will help in ease doing compliance.

36. Extension / relaxation of certain compliances by DoT. - Support Required from DoT During the Current COVID Situation in the Country

In the current Covid situation representation was made to DoT requesting to issue orders to put in abeyance/ suspend certain compliance activities

DoT vide letter dated 15-06-2021 had extended timeline / given relaxation in the following compliances.

1. Proofs of payment for claiming deductions for Q4 of 2020-21
2. TSPs need to submit physical copies of the supporting documents as proofs to support the deductions claimed by them.
3. Submission of Audited statement of Revenue and license statement (Audited AGR)
4. Acceptance of Bank Guarantee (BG) in Digital/Scanned format via email



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

Considering the exceptional circumstances, during lockdown this is a big relief to the industry. This will help in ease doing compliance

Others

Two days National Seminar on “Telecom Ecosystem Challenges & Opportunities” was arranged by the NICF, Ministry of Communications, Ghitorni. Mr. Gopal Mittal, Associate DG, F&C attended and participated in the same as panelist and give presentation on key issues related to direct and indirect taxation pertaining to telecom sector.



10

COAI REPORTS & SUBMISSIONS



1. **Deployment of Small Cells and Aerial fibre on the Street Furniture**

COAI participated in the discussion of the Committee formed under Kerala Sr. DDG, DoT on using the poles of DISCOM KSEB for deploying small cells and serial fibre. COAI submitted key inputs on the same that were captured in the report of the Committee.

COAI is also a part of the TEC Committee on “Roll out of Street Infrastructure and Small Cells for 5G Networks”. COAI also provided key inputs to TEC which were part of the Recommendations of the Committee.

2. **Safety and Security of Telecom Infrastructure**

COAI sent representations to all Chief Secretaries of States/UTs to issue necessary directions for the safety of Telecom/ Digital Infrastructure in Dec 2021. On COAI’s request, the State Government of Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Odisha issued positive directions to concerned Deputy Commissioners/ District Collectors / Superintendent of Police to be vigilant and take necessary action in safeguarding the Telecom / Digital Infrastructure in their jurisdiction.

Reminder letters were submitted to CSs of 25 States/UTs in Jan 2022 citing positive orders (Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Odisha) for favourable directions on safeguarding telecom infrastructure. LSA officials of Delhi, Meghalaya, and Bihar, have written to Chief Secretaries of States/UTs to issue necessary directions for the safety of Telecom Infrastructure.

3. **Demystifying the misinformation being spread linking 5G technology**

COAI’s submission was done to Secretary DoT dated 07 May 2021 titled “Demystifying the Misinformation being spread linking 5G technology and testing with the COVID-19 pandemic”. Positive Directions were issued by Haryana, UP Police, Gujarat, & Rajasthan.

4. **Priority EB tariff at Industrial tariff**

COAI submitted letters to Secretary Power/ Energy in July 2021 for priority EB tariff at Industrial/Favourable tariff. On COAI’s request, positive letters were issued by Jharkhand, J&K, Ladakh, and Madhya Pradesh to take suitable action.

COAI also submitted a letter to CERC on 10.01.2022 for priority EB tariff at Industrial/ Favourable tariff

COAI submitted a representation to the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC)/ Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) of 30 States/UTs for priority EB connection and at industrial rates.

5. **Priority Covid Vaccination (Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Odisha)**

COAI's submission done to Chief Secretaries/ Administrators of all States/UTs across India and coordinated with the DoT (Circle-units), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, various State Governments, and Telecom Industry to ensure that the field employees of the TSPs/IPs/ OEMs are given priority for getting the COVID-19 prevention vaccine.

Due to these coordinated efforts orders were issued by Govt. of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Goa, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh to categorize telecom warriors as frontline workers and helping them to get the vaccination on priority.

6. **North Delhi Municipal Corporation (North DMC) order to all Zonal Deputy Commissioners dated 20.09.2021**

North Delhi Municipal Corporation (North DMC) issued regressive order to all Zonal Deputy Commissioners dated 20.09.2021 putting conditions and restrictions on the installation of CoW.

COAI's submission was done to DG(T) on 18.11.2021 and to the Commissioner of North DMC on 21.10.2021 for withdrawal of an order issued by the Remunerative Projects (RP) cell of North DMC dated 20.09.2021. On our request, Delhi LSA also wrote to North DMC on 18.11.2021 to resolve the issue.

On COAI's request, North DMC has withdrawn its regressive order dated 20.09.2021 on 08.03.2022.

7. **Reduction in Wayleave charges**

One-time Way Leave charges are being levied by

North DMC (@INR 684/- per mtr), SDMC (@ INR 881/- per mtr), EDMC (@ INR 636/- per meter). COAI requested Delhi municipalities to remove the way leave charges.

COAI's submissions were done to the Secretary, DoT, and to the Commissioners of MCD for removal of Wayleave charges. On COAI's request, all 3 MCDs of Delhi i.e East DMC, South DMC, and North DMC have reduced their Wayleave charges to INR 200/- per meter.

8. **South DMC revised the fees of the pole site installed before 2016**

In South DMC Circular dated 05.01.2021 (hereinafter referred to as "Captioned Office Order") issued by Addl. Commissioner (Engg.) of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation revised charges for Cell Towers/Poles irrespective of height (RTT/GBT/GBM/RTP) to Rs. 10,000/- (Rs. Ten thousand) per month or Rs. 1, 00, 000/- (Rs. One lakh) per annum, excluding sharing. In the case of sharing, 25% extra will be applicable per sharing in either mode of payment will be applicable under the jurisdiction of South Delhi Municipal Corporation.

On COAI's submission done on 04.02.2021 and follow-ups done thereafter, South DMC issued a circular dated 08.03.2022 to accept the fee for permissions of pole sites for the period before 01.01.2016 @Rs. 20,000/- per pole /per operator for five years.

9. **RoW Guidelines 2022**

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) had released draft policy guidelines to bring consistency in Right of Way-related procedures across states and spur the deployment of telecom infrastructure ahead of a pan-India rollout of fifth-generation or 5G technology. COAI submitted its response to the draft policy to DoT on 21st April 2022.

10. **Reduction in Pole and Manhole Charges in Rajasthan**

COAI made several submissions/representations to the State Government of Rajasthan w.r.t manhole charges and aerial fibre Charges. The

Govt. of Rajasthan via its order dated 01.02.22 approved following reduction in the charges

- ⊙ laying of Aerial OFC to INR 1,000/- per pole annually,
- ⊙ Manhole to INR 2,000/-per manhole/chamber at District Headquarters & INR 1,000/-per manhole/chamber in other towns.

11. **Constitution of the Committee by Ministry of Defence (MoD) on the RoW Policy:**

Based on various submissions and follow-ups done with DoT and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), MoD has formed a committee to see the issues raised by COAI regarding RoW policy of MoD. COAI is the member in this committee.

12. **OFC Data for mapping on BISAG Portal and Central Telecom Infrastructure and Coverage Portal for NBM and Gati Shakti Programme**

Subsequent to DoT meeting on 18th Nov 2021, DoT sent a letter on 30th Nov 2021 to all TSPs and sought information of OFC data for the BISAG and Central Telecom Network Portal projects. On 1st Dec 2021, we have submitted the letter to DoT and requested to seek this information from BBNL and USOF.

13. **TRAI consultation paper on Regulatory Framework for Promoting Data Economy Through Establishment of Data Centres, Content Delivery Networks, and Interconnect Exchanges in India**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 16th Dec 2021. Due date for submission of inputs is 13th Jan 2022 and for counter comment is 27th Jan 2022.

14. **Temporary suspension of internet services due to law and order situation:**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 16th Dec 2021 requesting DoT for exemption of M2M services from the purview of internet shutdown orders issued by any competent authority.

15. **Significant delay in permissions in respect of repair & maintenance of submarine cables**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 16th Dec 2021 on this issue and requested DoT for providing clearances of pending requests pertaining to the repair of submarine cables on priority and provide timely approval to the TSPs for such clearances in future

16. **Return of Bank Guarantees**

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 25th January, 2022 requesting for early return of Bank Guarantees.

17. **Conduct of Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode:**

COAI has submitted a letter to TRAI on 21st Dec 2021 requesting to allow TSPs to conduct Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode for next two quarters i.e. upto 30 Jun 2022.

Post submission of COAI's request on 21st Dec 2021, TRAI on 20 Jan 2022 has allowed TSPs to conduct Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode for next two quarters i.e., up to 30 Jun 2022.

18. **Need for utilization of eNodeB enabling maximum coverage in the expansion of 4G networks across rural India**

COAI has submitted this letter to DoT on 11th Jan 2022 requesting to give priority and mandating use of eNodeB which facilitates maximum coverage with greater tower heights for 4G networks established under USOF project.

19. **TRAI Consultation Paper on "Auction of Spectrum in frequency bands identified for IMT/5G"**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 30th Nov 2021. Due date for submission of inputs is 10th Jan 2022 and for counter comment is 24th Jan 2022. COAI has submitted the response to TRAI on 10th Jan 2022. TRAI scheduled the Open House Discussion for this consultation paper on 8th Feb 2022.

TRAI has issued its recommendation on the same on 11th Apr 2022.

20. **TRAI consultation paper on Regulatory Framework for Promoting Data Economy Through Establishment of Data Centres, Content Delivery Networks, and Interconnect Exchanges in India:**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 16th Dec 2021. Due date for submission of inputs was 10th Feb 2022 and for counter comment was 24th Feb 2022. COAI has submitted the response to TRAI on 11th Jan 2022. TRAI held Open House on 6th May 2022.

21. **TRAI consultation paper on Ease of Doing Business in Telecom and Broadcasting Sector**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 8th Dec 2021. Due date for submission of inputs was 09th Feb 2022 and for counter comment was 23rd Feb 2022. COAI has submitted the response to TRAI on 11th Jan 2022. TRAI held Open House on 21st Apr 2022.

22. **TRAI CP on “Use of Street Furniture for Small Cell and Aerial Fiber Deployment”**

COAI has submitted a request letter to TRAI seeking extension in timelines for submitting the written comments to the Consultation Paper. The due date for submission of comments was 20th April 2022 and counter-comments was 04th May 2022.

TRAI has considered our request and granted extension till 11th May 2022 for the submission of written comments and counter comments up to 25th May 2022.

23. **TRAI issues Consultation Paper on “Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity”**

TRAI had issued a Consultation Paper on “Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity” on 25th March 2022. Last date of submission of comments was 04th May 2022 and counter comments on 18th May 2022.

COAI has submitted a request letter to TRAI on 26th April 2022 seeking an extension in timelines for submitting the comments. TRAI has considered our request and extended the timelines for submission of written comments

up to 15th June 2022 and counter comments up to 29th June 2022.

24. **Implication of proposed Merger of BBNL-BSNL on USOF Projects**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 11th Feb 2022 requesting DOT and USOF to kindly provide enough safeguards for all the other TSPs in case it is decided to merge BBNL and BSNL.

25. **Inputs to the Committee Examining Reduction in Compliances under DGT**

DoT has constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of DG Telecom to propose suggestions for reforms which will reduce the compliance burden of the licensees. In this regard, DoT had sought inputs from COAI. COAI has submitted the inputs to DoT on 21st Feb 2022.

26. **Inputs for formulation of recommendations on IoT/M2M**

DoT has tasked NTIPRIT to give its recommendations to facilitate and promote IoT/M2M services in India. COAI has submitted the inputs to NTIPRIT on 18th Feb 2022.

27. **Blocking of websites**

DoT has issued a letter on 11th Mar 2022 vide which all the ISPs have been instructed to take immediate necessary action for compliance of the Court order dated 03rd March 2022 with respect to infringing websites bearing the keyword “Dabur”.

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 23rd March 2022, stating that TSPs/ISPs, as an intermediary, could not be the deciding authority to identify the veracity of the content. TSPs/ISPs can block the prescribed websites only as per the direction received from the competent authority.

28. **Copyright infringement- Court matter**

DoT has sought inputs from all the ISPs regarding “possibility of issuing a warning to the viewers of the infringing content, if technologically feasible in the form of e-mails, or pop-ups or such other modes cautioning the viewers to cease viewing/

downloading the infringing material” vide letter dated 11th March 2022.

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 22nd March 2022, stating that presently our member operators are able to display the warning in blocking messages for “http” websites / URLs only, and the same could not be possible for the “https” websites / URLs due to the technological limitations.

29. **Temporary suspension of internet services due to law-and-order situation**

Government of West Bengal, Home and Hill Affairs Department issued an order on 3rd March 2022, vide which all the TSPs have been directed to temporarily suspend the internet services for eight (8) days, in selected blocks of Districts.

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT and MHA on 9th March 2022 and 11th March 2022 respectively requesting to issue necessary guidelines to the State Government to avoid issuing instructions for internet shutdown for frivolous reasons.

30. **Proposal for Modifications in the Monthly Wireless Data Usage Report-incorporating additional State/UT wise input formats**

COAI has submitted a letter to TRAI on 24th March 2022 requesting the authority that due to complexities and the system constraints, it is not feasible for our member TSPs to provide the State level details on fields/parameters on the monthly Wireless Data Usage report.

31. **Parameters for Internet Protocol Detail Record (IPDR) and SYS LOG of Network Address Translation (NAT)**

A joint industry letter has been submitted to DoT on 29th March 2022, stating the practical challenges associated with the implementation guidelines dated 16th November 2021 issued by DoT for storage for ‘Parameters for Internet Protocol Detail Record (IPDR) and SYS LOG of Network Address Translation (NAT)’ and requested to put this guidelines/requirement in abeyance and hold an Industry discussion as per practice followed by DoT in the past for revision of any CDR format.

In this regard, DoT scheduled a meeting on 12th Apr 2022 and issued a letter vide which DoT has asked all the TSPs/ISPs to implement the said DoT guidelines by 31st May 2022.

32. **Reduction in Regulatory Levies - USOF Contribution**

COAI has submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 31st March 2022 and requested for the below:

- a. USO levy should be abolished
- b. However, if that is not possible immediately, the current levy should be reduced to 1% from the present 5%

33. **Reduction in Regulatory Levies - License Fee Contribution**

COAI has submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 04th April 2022 and requested that License Fee should be brought down to 1% at the earliest to cover admin costs by the DoT/Government.

34. **Cloud based service offering by new licensees**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 31st Mar 2022. Vide this letter we have highlighted to DoT that the Mobile Series and LRN codes have been allotted to an Access Service licensee to provide Internet Telephony Services.

However, the said licensee does not have spectrum, access network and pan India license. This has raised serious concerns in the industry as internet telephony, through mobile series, is akin to Mobile Services and will compete directly with mobile service providers who have invested in spectrum, access network and all India licenses. This will lead to serious non-level playing field issues.

35. **Concerns regarding Handset OS Impacting Location-Based Service (LBS) Reporting Accuracy**

COAI submitted a letter to various LEAs requesting their urgent intervention and a meeting as per their convenience to discuss the following:

- a. Mandatory requirements (Features, Functionalities, security guidelines, etc.)

for Handset OEMs/Chipset Manufacturers/ OS providers for the India market and the validation agencies for the same.

- b. Guidelines for Chipset/OS providers and handset/Device OEMs.
- c. Immediate & clear plan of implementation for existing devices in the market and forthcoming launches by OS providers, handset, and device OEMs.

36. **Implementation Compliance of Equipment Deployment from Trusted Sources**

COAI submitted a letter to DoT and NCSC jointly with ACTO and ISPAI requesting to kindly review the timeline and extend the time for implementing this License condition on DoT Amendment on procurement of Telecommunication equipment dated March 10, 2021, addressed to UASL, NLD, ILD, ISP, UL-VNO which is dependent on the smooth functioning of the Portal by at least six months to December 16, 2021. However, the Government launched the Trusted Telecom Portal www.trustedtelecom.gov.in on June 15, 2021, signalling the coming into effect of the National Security Directive on Telecommunication Sector (NSDTS). Post this, COAI made a submission to NSCS on June 21, 2021, on the same seeking confirmation and clarity on various issues related to the portal so that the industry can provide the details of the OEM entity and its authorized nodal officer on the Portal.

37. **Implementation of Single Number based Emergency Response Support System**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject requesting to do the following:

- a. Issue instructions to CDAC/State Agencies to reconsider the new addition of PSAP locations.
- b. Instruct PSAP service providers to desist from the demand of PRI cards of PSAP at every location to TSPs.
- c. Instruct state agencies to approve pending RoW applications and not levy any RoW

charges for the work concerning PRI connectivity to PSAP.

38. **Security and Financial concerns in respect of misuse of new OSP regime**

COAI made a submission to Secretary, DoT - stating that the liberalization of the OSP regime, vide new guidelines for OSPs dated November 05, 2020, is being misused and misrepresented to allude that the OSPs do not require to rely on licensed service providers for VPN connectivity. COAI requested that no change be brought in the current oversight in the provision of VPN services and requested DoT to clarify that VPN connectivity in connecting various OSP centres is permitted only through the NLD route.

39. **Graded Penalty Structure for Non-Compliance**

COAI submitted a letter to Secretary, DoT - on the issue of the penalty in case of any non-compliance at a maximum of Rs. 50 Crores without getting into the proportionality and genesis of such noncompliance and its possible ramifications. COAI requested DoT to review the penalty regime in the present licensing framework and sought a meeting with the industry in this regard to discuss the issue in detail.

40. **Finalization of NFAP**

COAI made a submission to DoT, requesting to finalize and issue the NFAP at the earliest as it is an important document that earmarks.

41. **Request to Initiate Consultation to bring the Carriage Distribution (DTH & Cable) Platform under the Ministry of Communications**

COAI made a submission to TRAI mentioning that there is a need to create sharper focus and orderly separation between content and carriage by:

- a. Assigning the DoT to be a single Department for all licensing requirements across the access platforms ☒ Mobile, Broadband, Cable, and DTH.
- b. Retaining the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting as an umbrella body for all

content regulation, management, and appropriate censorship across all mediums with these platforms being covered under orderly rules to carry the same content.

COAI requested the Authority to initiate a Consultation Paper on this issue at the earliest.

42. **Security and toll-bypass-related concerns in revised Guidelines for Other Service Providers (OSPs)**

COAI made a submission to DoT, requesting to simplify the regulatory compliances, inspections, and audits by various wings of DoT, which are extremely cumbersome for the TSPs to do the business. We also submitted that the liberalization and regulatory simplification of a section of the telecom industry should not be carried out at the cost of national security, legitimate revenue of TSPs, orderly growth of the sector investor's confidence and therefore, requested DoT to revisit such dispensations to ensure level playing field.

43. **Reallocation of deactivated/disconnected cellular mobile telephone connection of a subscriber**

COAI made a submission to DoT, requesting to relax the specified minimum period of 90 days for re-issuance of disconnected/deactivated mobile numbers on account of non-usage/request of customer as the same will help service providers to cater to the increased demand and it will also be a citizen-centric approach on part of the DoT.

44. **Call Data Records (CDR) format with 22 fields**

COAI made a submission to DoT on recent DoT instructions dated July 20, 2021, on the subject. COAI requested DoT to provide an extension of at least two months on the implementation of the instructions till the nationwide lockdown gets uplifted.

45. **Allocation of Access Spectrum**

COAI made a submission to Secretary DoT, urging the Government not to reserve or de-license any spectrum for use of independent/ individual

private networks which has been identified or is likely to be identified for use of IMT/commercial use.

46. **Fake KYC Messages/Communication**

COAI made a submission to DoT, on the recent menace regarding fake SMS/ communication for completing their KYC. We requested DoT for its urgent intervention in the matter by issuing Government Advisory to the customers of being careful of such fake communications and sending a message to fraudsters of legal action that may be initiated against them. We also conveyed that a strong message from the Government on this is essential to curb such fraudulent activities.

47. **Clarifications on Various Issues with Respect to Subscriber Verification through D-KYC Process**

COAI made a submission to DoT, on the issue of verification of PoS / PoS agents requesting DoT to kindly reconsider the provisions of the circular on the merit or alternatively:

- a. Extend the date of implementation till 31.10.2021 for on- boarding of new PoS agents in compliance with the circular.
- b. Extend the date of implementation at least till 31.03.2022 for ensuring compliance with the circular for all existing PoS agents.
- c. Exempt COCP connections issued to TSP-owned stores from the ambit of the circular.

48. **Incorporation of Digital Signature Certificates (DSC) for CDR/IPDR request from Law Enforcement Agencies**

COAI made a submission to DoT, proposing to incorporate the Digital Signature Certificates (DSC) in all forwarding letters and Sec. 65B Certification issued by their respective Nodal Teams across circles in respect of the CDR/IPDR provided to LEAs, which are as of now being provided in hard copies signed individually by the Nodal Officer. COAI requested DoT to take this forward with the LEAs, MHA, and Law Ministry and allow us to have this process digitized and more secured.

49. **Adverse Impact on FTTH Network Expansion, Delinking of MTCTE and NSDTS, Easing Manufacturing Location Restrictions under TEC MTCTE Certification for Global Telecom OEMs**

COAI made a submission to TEC, on the subject requesting urgent intervention to issue instructions to lift abeyance on these certificates irrespective of the origin of manufacturer/ Global OEMs and provide relief for the industry and citizens alike. This will tremendously help the rollout of necessary broadband networks and enable mass connectivity in line with NDCP-2018.

50. **Launch of MTCTE Phase III & Phase IV**

COAI made a submission to DoT, on the matter. COAI made the following recommendations regarding government notification on the launch of Phase 3 & 4:

- a. ILAC labs 'and local labs' test reports should be kept up to a period of at least 5 years before the application date instead of 2 years.
- b. Extend the timeline for mandatory certificate requirement by at least 18 months from the date of notification and adopt a tiered approach.
- c. Allow the ILAC labs' reports for the first 2 years after the certification becomes mandatory to ease the burden on industry as well as on TEC as more than 36 product types are covered in phase 4 which translates to thousands of equipment and hence thousands of applications.
- d. Accept earlier versions of standards for products already available in the market before the ER of that product becomes effective.
- e. Maintain one Registration number across Provisional, Regular, and Renewals for a particular product.
- f. Introduce a confidentiality option in the application process to enable OEMs to select

a Publication date of the certificate in the TEC-MTCTE portal.

- g. Enlist those products in future phases whose ERs are yet to be uploaded on the portal and share the revised BOM or guide us on how Split unit type models can be defined in BOM.
- h. Requested TEC to allow only TEC logo to be displayed on the body of the product without the additional text cited above. However, Logo plus additional information can be displayed on the packaging box.

51. **Draft 5G Trials Test Schedule and Test Procedure**

COAI made a submission to DoT, with reference to the Draft 5G trial test schedule and test procedure (TSTP) circulated by TEC vide email dated October 01, 2021. COAI requested TEC/ DoT, not to issue any TSTP for the 5G trial licenses and allow the operators to submit outcome reports as per scenarios tested by them.

52. **Audit of Latest EMF self-certificates**

COAI made a submission to DoT, on the matter where LSAs are supposed to audit the latest Self Certificate of EMF submission by the TSPs as per DoT guidelines, however, some LSAs are picking up old certificates for audit purposes. Vide this letter, COAI requested DoT to issue a clarification to LSAs to audit only the latest certificates.

53. **EMF Self-Certificates Audit Percentage**

Post Order from Hon'ble TDSAT, discussion amongst DoT and industry on testing fees and EMF audit percentage. Testing fee has been increased from INR 4000/- to INR 8000/- per site. A Committee chaired by DGT was formed to discuss reduction in compliances required and audit percentage. COAI submitted that Audit percentage be reduced to less than 3%, without imposing any additional conditions.

54. **TEC Committee on "Developing standards/ policy for roll out of Street Infrastructure and Small Cells in 5G"**

The TEC Committee issued the report with the following recommendations:

- a. India to work towards aligning with ICNIRP - 2020
- b. EIRP limit for (LPBTs) Small Cells should be reviewed to increase the limit.
- c. Pilots with various DISCOMS for installation of Small Cells on EB poles
- d. SACFA requirement to be exempted

55. **Industry Participation in Spectrum Act**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject requesting to include COAI and its members in any discussions pertaining to the Spectrum Act.

56. **SACFA Related Issues**

COAI submitted that a simplified online process through the Saral Sanchar Portal has been made effective, however, there are some more enhancements that are required to make the process smooth including only one SACFA clearance for a site/tower for multi band / multi technology deployment by a TSP for providing wireless services should be required. LPBTs should be made exempt from such requirements and the current application fee for SACFA needs to be reviewed in view of network expansions / 5G roll out / new technologies.

57. **Private Networks**

COAI submitted that presently, the resources for such Captive Network are made available from the resources of licensed service providers which include spectrum acquired through transparent auction process. TSPs can continue to meet demands of industrial use cases through Network slicing, Spectrum leasing and Higher bandwidth use-cases or device densities with access to wider spectrum. The licensed Access Service Providers are fully capable of providing these services in most competitive and economic manner compared to private companies looking for such solutions. Any de-licensing/reservation of spectrum for Industrial use/establishment of private Captive networks, as demanded by few companies, would not only cause huge loss to

the exchequer but will also lead to sub-optimal utilization of this scarce resource. Hence, such move is not only technically uncalled for but also legally untenable.

58. **Suggestion on keeping a record of missed calls by TSPs**

COAI made a submission to DoT on November 17, 2021, on the subject that there should be no requirement to generate CDRs of unanswered Calls as this can lead to a catastrophic impact on the overall system capacity to generate and process CDRs for security and commercial purposes. Also, as an alternate mechanism, National Security Agencies can always get information about the call attempts of suspects by putting such numbers on interception, wherein the relevant information is available as part of CRI data and is transferred through FTP to their servers placed in TSP premises on a real-time and Pan-India basis. Hence, the requirement of LEAs is even being met today and there is no reason to take a drastic step of generating CDRs for unanswered calls also, which can put telecom operations in jeopardy.

59. **Feedback on QoS document for CAP Dissemination through SMS and Cell Broadcast**

COAI made a submission to DoT, on the subject that our members are committed to continuing supporting DoT/Government in any event of a disaster and requested that there should not be any mandate to implement QoS parameters to respond to such situations.

60. **Security Audit**

COAI made submissions to DoT mentioning some policies/controls which shall be audited at LSA level and rest all other ones shall be audited centrally. COAI has also been requesting DoT to publish a final framework/SOP at an earliest to clearly bifurcate the points which are to be conducted at Central Level and LSA Level. The security processes that are managed centrally (i.e., over 90% of the total processes) should be audited at a central level while the TERM cells can audit the rest, such as physical assets at the circle level. This will ensure security audit related compliances by DoT, while doing away

with the duplication of effort at the DoT and TSP end. This process will bring efficiency and effectiveness

61. Requirement of intimating location of ISP Nodes

COAI submitted that under the ISP License, a licensee has to report location details of ISP nodes or Point of Presence on quarterly basis to the licensor and in case new nodes are to be installed, a one-month prior notice should be given to the licensor. As TSPs have seen huge rise in internet traffic due to consumption of video, and a growing user base – to meet the growing demand, the licensees have to constantly upgrade their networks by adding new nodes and it makes it practically impossible to give a one-month prior notice to the licensor. Accordingly, this requirement to submit quarterly reports of ISP Nodes/PoPs and monthly advance notices for the installation of new nodes should be removed instead requirement of updating the licensor about the ISP nodes be fulfilled through the annual license inspection.

62. Tariff issues related to SMS and Cell Broadcast alerts disseminated through Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) platform during disasters/non-disasters

COAI responded to Consultation Paper issued by TRAI on November 03, 2021, on the subject. COAI submitted that SMS is the preferred mode of disseminating these messages as it is more customer-friendly and it provides a clear advantage in the diverse devices spread in the country. COAI also submitted that the Cell Broadcast method adds no significant value to the system as it is handset dependent. The cell Broadcast method has even caused corruption in the SIMs and instances of SIMs becoming faulty have been faced after the Cell Broadcast. Therefore, without adding any value to the system, Cell Broadcast can potentially cause disruption of services to the customers.

63. Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Promoting Telecom and Networking Products Manufacturing in India

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject requesting as below:

- a. Extend the scheme window by a year from the previous FY25-26 to FY26-27
- b. Give the option to the bidder to choose one of two five-year windows: either FY21-22 to FY25-26 OR FY22-23 to FY26-27

64. Feedback on C-DOT document on proposed Cell Broadcast Solutions

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject mentioning various challenges identified while implementing the cell broadcast-based solution. COAI requested that there should not be any mandate to implement a CB system to respond to such situations. Such situations are beyond the control of any stakeholder and all of us have been putting our best efforts to deal with them.

65. Concerns in the Saral Sanchar portal post-implementation of the simplification process from Cabinet Reforms

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject proposing the following changes in the Saral Sanchar portal on priority:

- a. Applications for SACFA clearance to be applied with complete frequency band earmarked for telecommunication services and same should be incorporated in the Saral Sanchar portal.
- b. Reinstatement of NEFT and RTGS options for payment, as existed earlier.
- c. BharatKosh Challans issued on or prior to November 22, 2021, should be also considered for the payment of applications to be applied.
- d. Provision to delete the SACFA applications by TSPs on the Saral Sanchar portal prior to final submission may be provided to avoid junk creation.

DoT issued a notification on December 21, 2021, based on COAI submission mentioning that issues a), c), and d) (mentioned above) have been addressed and necessary changes have

been implemented in the SACFA module of the Saral Sanchar portal and in case of issue b), technical feasibility is being examined and will be informed shortly.

66. **Issue of Blacklisted Point of Sale (PoS)**

COAI made a submission to DoT, on the subject as DoT vide its notification dated December 02, 2021, instructed TSPs to share details of blacklisted PoS by the 8th of every month. As this activity requires IT system developments at TSPs' end for monthly reporting to LSAs, COAI requested DoT to provide at least 3 months' time to provide this data and to kindly consult TSPs in case of preparation of guidelines/process on blacklisting of PoS.

67. **Police Verification of PoS / PoS Agents in J&K, Assam, and NESAs**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject mentioning to DoT that the process adopted for police verification in the Northeast service area is quicker & efficient and hence, the same process should be replicated in J&K and Assam service areas, so as to standardize the overall procedure on police verification as well as speed up the process.

68. **Accelerating Industry 4.0 & Enabling Next-Generation Technologies & Services - non-applicability of the end-user list in respect of Bulk mobile connections provided by TSPs to enterprises as part of certain telecom solutions**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject wherein COAI submitted 5 solutions where it will not be feasible for TSPs to provide an end-user list as the SIMs/connections are not used in the conventional sense, have limited functionalities/uses and have no corresponding individual end-users. COAI requested DoT not to insist on end-user list requirements and periodic verification for such solutions to facilitate the digital transformation of businesses and their offerings to consumers in the country through these solutions and request DoT if they can issue necessary instructions/directions in this regard.

69. **Allocation of Numbering Series**

COAI submitted that current criteria for

allocating numbering resources for both wireless and wireline services is very stringent and cumbersome process, involving physical audit and certification by DoT LSA units. This process is a regular approval process and should be simplified by making it online basis self-certification by TSPs. Further the threshold limits should also be relaxed considerably, especially for wireline services to meet proliferation goals. Time has come to introduce an automated, online mechanism to apply and allocate numbering resources (Fixed-Line, Mobile, M2M and any other) using a simple, efficient number management system software within a time bound manner.

70. **Feedback on Proposed Implementation of NavIC into the Devices Sold in India**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the matter. COAI requested DoT:

- a. To extend the implementation of NavIC to January 1st, 2025, instead of January 1st, 2023.
- b. To examine the possibility of switchover to the L1 band from the L5 band while implementing NavIC, and
- c. Sought some clarifications regarding the implementation of NavIC.

71. **Dealer Possession License**

COAI submitted that DPL (Dealer Possession License) renewal should be on a five year basis. DPL data will be provided on a yearly basis starting from 1st Dec of the previous year till 30th Nov of the current year instead of from 1st Jan till 31st Dec of the current year or, Provisional DPL should be issued (maybe with 45 days validity) post submission of initial renewal application before the expiry of license with stock register from 1st Jan till 30th Nov (period of 5 years). DPL holders should be exempted from the experimental license, the non-radiating type required for in-house Demo and testing purposes, especially business locations covered under the license.

72. **ILAC Report Relaxation for products under MTCTE Phase III and Phase IV**

COAI made a submission to DoT on March 22, 2022, on the matter. COAI requested DoT: To instruct TEC to remove Annexure 2 from MTCTE Notification dated January 31, 2022 and allow ILAC reports relaxation for TR parameters across all products under Phases III & IV until June 30, 2024.

73. **Removal of Consumer Electronic Devices from the MTCTE Procedure of TEC**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the matter. COAI requested DoT - To instruct TEC to remove consumer electronic products such as smartwatches, wearables, smart cameras, etc. under Phase III of MTCTE and 5G mobile phones under the proposed Phase V under the proposed MTCTE Certification regime.

74. **Response to TRAI Consultation Paper on “Promoting Networking and Telecom Equipment Manufacturing in India”**

COAI submitted the response to TRAI suggesting ways to promote telecom equipment manufacturing in India by looking at the issue holistically and the steps to be taken in this regard.

75. **Implementation of Central Monitoring System (CMS)**

COAI made a submission to DoT on the subject requesting DoT to hold discussion with security agencies/stakeholders to expedite increase in utilization of CMS for LI provisioning and only after a reasonable acceptance of CMS for LI, efforts to be made to make additional features of CDR and SDR functional.

76. **OFC Data for mapping on BISAG Portal and Central Telecom Infrastructure and Coverage Portal for NBM and Gati Shakti Programme:**

Subsequent to DoT meeting on 18th Nov 2021, DoT sent a letter on 30th Nov 2021 to all TSPs and sought information of OFC data for the BISAG and Central Telecom Network Portal projects. On 1st Dec 2021, we have submitted the letter to DoT and requested to seek this information from BBNL and USOF.

77. **TRAI consultation paper on Regulatory Framework for Promoting Data Economy Through Establishment of Data Centres, Content Delivery Networks, and Interconnect Exchanges in India**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 16th Dec 2021. Due date for submission of inputs is 13th Jan 2022 and for counter comment is 27th Jan 2022.

78. **Temporary suspension of internet services due to law and order situation:**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 16th Dec 2021 requesting DoT for exemption of M2M services from the purview of internet shutdown orders issued by any competent authority.

79. **Significant delay in permissions in respect of repair & maintenance of submarine cables**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 16th Dec 2021 on this issue and requested DoT for providing clearances of pending requests pertaining to the repair of submarine cables on priority and provide timely approval to the TSPs for such clearances in future

80. **Return of Bank Guarantees**

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 25th January, 2022 requesting for early return of Bank Guarantees.

81. **Conduct of Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode**

COAI has submitted a letter to TRAI on 21st Dec 2021 requesting to allow TSPs to conduct Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode for next two quarters i.e. upto 30 Jun 2022.

Post submission of COAI's request on 21st Dec 2021, TRAI on 20 Jan 2022 has allowed TSPs to conduct Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs) through digital/online mode for next two quarters i.e., up to 30 Jun 2022.

82. **Need for utilization of eNodeB enabling maximum coverage in the expansion of 4G networks across rural India**

COAI has submitted this letter to DoT on 11th Jan 2022 requesting to give priority and mandating use of eNodeB which facilitates maximum coverage with greater tower heights for 4G networks established under USOF project.

83. **TRAI Consultation Paper on “Auction of Spectrum in frequency bands identified for IMT/5G**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 30th Nov 2021. Due date for submission of inputs is 10th Jan 2022 and for counter comment is 24th Jan 2022. COAI has submitted the response to TRAI on 10th Jan 2022. TRAI scheduled the Open House Discussion for this consultation paper on 8th Feb 2022.

TRAI has issued its recommendation on the same on 11th Apr 2022.

84. **TRAI consultation paper on Regulatory Framework for Promoting Data Economy Through Establishment of Data Centres, Content Delivery Networks, and Interconnect Exchanges in India:**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 16th Dec 2021. Due date for submission of inputs was 10th Feb 2022 and for counter comment was 24th Feb 2022. COAI has submitted the response to TRAI on 11th Jan 2022. TRAI held Open House on 6th May 2022.

85. **TRAI consultation paper on Ease of Doing Business in Telecom and Broadcasting Sector**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 8th Dec 2021. Due date for submission of inputs was 09th Feb 2022 and for counter comment was 23rd Feb 2022. COAI has submitted the response to TRAI on 11th Jan 2022. TRAI held Open House on 21st Apr 2022.

86. **TRAI CP on “Use of Street Furniture for Small Cell and Aerial Fiber Deployment”**

COAI has submitted a request letter to TRAI seeking extension in timelines for submitting the written comments to the Consultation Paper. The due date for submission of comments was 20th April 2022 and counter-comments was 04th May 2022.

TRAI has considered our request and granted extension till 11th May 2022 for the submission of written comments and counter comments up to 25th May 2022.

87. **TRAI issues Consultation Paper on “Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity”**

TRAI had issued a Consultation Paper on “Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity” on 25th March 2022. Last date of submission of comments was 04th May 2022 and counter comments on 18th May 2022.

COAI has submitted a request letter to TRAI on 26th April 2022 seeking an extension in timelines for submitting the comments. TRAI has considered our request and extended the timelines for submission of written comments up to 15th June 2022 and counter comments up to 29th June 2022.

88. **Implication of proposed Merger of BBNL-BSNL on USOF Projects**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 11th Feb 2022 requesting DOT and USOF to kindly provide enough safeguards for all the other TSPs in case it is decided to merge BBNL and BSNL.

89. **Inputs to the Committee Examining Reduction in Compliances under DGT**

DoT has constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of DG Telecom to propose suggestions for reforms which will reduce the compliance burden of the licensees. In this regard, DoT had sought inputs from COAI. COAI has submitted the inputs to DoT on 21st Feb 2022.

90. **Inputs for formulation of recommendations on IoT/M2M**

DoT has tasked NTIPRIT to give its recommendations to facilitate and promote IoT/M2M services in India. COAI has submitted the inputs to NTIPRIT on 18th Feb 2022.

91. **Blocking of websites**

DoT has issued a letter on 11th Mar 2022 vide which all the ISPs have been instructed to take immediate necessary action for compliance

of the Court order dated 03rd March 2022 with respect to infringing websites bearing the keyword “Dabur”.

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 23rd March 2022, stating that TSPs/ISPs, as an intermediary, could not be the deciding authority to identify the veracity of the content. TSPs/ISPs can block the prescribed websites only as per the direction received from the competent authority.

92. **Copyright infringement- Court matter**

DoT has sought inputs from all the ISPs regarding “possibility of issuing a warning to the viewers of the infringing content, if technologically feasible in the form of e-mails, or pop-ups or such other modes cautioning the viewers to cease viewing/downloading the infringing material” vide letter dated 11th March 2022.

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 22nd March 2022, stating that presently our member operators are able to display the warning in blocking messages for “http” websites / URLs only, and the same could not be possible for the “https” websites / URLs due to the technological limitations.

93. **Temporary suspension of internet services due to law-and-order situation**

Government of West Bengal, Home and Hill Affairs Department issued an order on 3rd March 2022, vide which all the TSPs have been directed to temporarily suspend the internet services for eight (8) days, in selected blocks of Districts.

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT and MHA on 9th March 2022 and 11th March 2022 respectively requesting to issue necessary guidelines to the State Government to avoid issuing instructions for internet shutdown for frivolous reasons.

94. **Proposal for Modifications in the Monthly Wireless Data Usage Report-incorporating additional State/UT wise input formats**

COAI has submitted a letter to TRAI on 24th March 2022 requesting the authority that due to complexities and the system constraints, it is not feasible for our member TSPs to provide the

State level details on fields/parameters on the monthly Wireless Data Usage report.

95. **Parameters for Internet Protocol Detail Record (IPDR) and SYS LOG of Network Address Translation (NAT)**

A joint industry letter has been submitted to DoT on 29th March 2022, stating the practical challenges associated with the implementation guidelines dated 16th November 2021 issued by DoT for storage for ‘Parameters for Internet Protocol Detail Record (IPDR) and SYS LOG of Network Address Translation (NAT)’ and requested to put this guidelines/requirement in abeyance and hold an Industry discussion as per practice followed by DoT in the past for revision of any CDR format.

In this regard, DoT scheduled a meeting on 12th Apr 2022 and issued a letter vide which DoT has asked all the TSPs/ISPs to implement the said DoT guidelines by 31st May 2022.

96. **Reduction in Regulatory Levies - USOF Contribution**

COAI has submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 31st March 2022 and requested for the below:

- c. USO levy should be abolished
- d. However, if that is not possible immediately, the current levy should be reduced to 1% from the present 5%

97. **Reduction in Regulatory Levies - License Fee Contribution**

COAI has submitted a follow-up letter to DoT on 04th April 2022 and requested that License Fee should be brought down to 1% at the earliest to cover admin costs by the DoT/Government.

98. **Cloud based service offering by new licensees**

COAI has submitted a letter to DoT on 31st Mar 2022. Vide this letter we have highlighted to DoT that the Mobile Series and LRN codes have been allotted to an Access Service licensee to provide Internet Telephony Services.

However, the said licensee does not have spectrum, access network and pan India license.

This has raised serious concerns in the industry as internet telephony, through mobile series, is akin to Mobile Services and will compete directly with mobile service providers who have invested in spectrum, access network and all India licenses. This will lead to serious non-level playing field issues.

99. **COAI Representation to Pune Municipal Corporation on the issue of Aerial OFC**

Pune Municipal Corporation issued letters to TSPs/IP1-s demanding payment of charges (including penalty) towards regularisation of aerial / overhead OFCs within its municipal limits.

On February 08, 2022, COAI Representation was submitted to PMC requesting the PMC to withdraw the Letters / Resolutions in respect of charges/penalty/shifting for overhead / aerial OFCs within the municipal limits of PMC.

100. **COAI Representation to North MCD on unilateral revision of permission fee**

On January 20, 2022 North MCD issued a circular on the issue of permission for installation of cell towers / pole sites under the jurisdiction of North MCD.

On February 09, 2022, COAI Representation was submitted to North MCD requesting the North MCD to withdraw its circular dated January 20, 2022.

101. **Representation on Key Tax Issues**

Representation made to the Secretary DoT and to concerned senior officer on key tax issues of the industry. It was informed that Telcos are facing lot of issues Multiplicity of compliance, scrutiny, Audits, Investigations and Litigation for large Pan India service providers. At state level also members are getting notices for ITC on equipment's installed on telecom tower, entertainment tax through online media/ internet implies multi fold compliance etc.

Key Issues covered were as follows.

- a) Exemption from GST on payment of LF, SUC and Spectrum acquired in auction.

- b) Refund of Accumulated balance in Input Tax Credit
- c) Multiplicity of compliance, audits, investigations, and litigation for large pan India service providers
- d) Input tax credit (ITC) on critical telecom equipment installed on telecom towers
- e) RoW - Service Tax Liability
- f) Service tax on AGR payable pursuant to Supreme Court

102. **Constitution of Group of Ministers on GST System Reforms**

In the 45th meeting the GST Council had constituted Group of Ministers (GoM) to look into matters related to System Reforms.

Few key issues under which operational issues are faced by the members are:

- a) Mismatch of tax reported in GSTR-1 Vs GSTR-3B
- b) Mismatch of ITC availed in GSTR-3B Vs GSTR-2A due to the return filing framework
- c) Capital Goods - Applicability of section 18(6) on stock transfer causing undue burden.
- d) Refund of GST
- e) Annual Returns (Form GSTR-9)
- f) Departmental actions-Notices/Enquiries in relation to non - compliance by the Vendors

We have made a detailed representation highlighting issues and suggestions of Members to GST Council and to the concerned senior officers for seeking clarity / resolution from the concerned authorities by way of necessary notifications and clarifications.

103. **Procedural issues in GST Compliance**

There are multiple procedural issues faced by the members while doing GST compliance.

Some issues on which clarification / amendment is required are as follows:

- ⊙ GSTR- 1, GSTR-3B & e-way bill
- ⊙ Input Tax Credit & Reconciliation
- ⊙ Capital Goods
- ⊙ Refund of GST
- ⊙ Annual Returns (Form GSTR-9)
- ⊙ Departmental actions

We have made a detailed representation highlighting issues and suggestions to the GST Council and to the concerned senior officers in the MoF / DoT for seeking clarity / resolution from the concerned authorities by way of necessary notifications and clarifications.

104. **RoW - Service Tax Liability**

On November 30, 2018, notification was issued by the MoF, exempting service tax on services provided by way of granting permission of “right of way” by “local authorities” during the period from 01 July 2012 to 30 June 2017.

This solved partially problem as the scope of exemption is limited to only ‘local authorities’ In addition to “local authorities”, charges for ROW permissions are also collected by Central and State Government Departments like Railways, and PWD etc.

Follow up representation filed with the office of Revenue Secretary, Chairman CBIC, Secretary DoT etc. with a request to amend the said notification and replace ‘local authorities’ with ‘appropriate authorities. MoF initiated inquiry and asked response / data. Same is being submitted by COAI / DoT to the MoF.

105. **GST- Input Tax credit on equipment installed on telecom tower.**

Some of the State Tax Authorities are proposing to deny ITC on telecom equipment including crucial network equipment viz. antenna, base stations, transmitters and other utilities like DG and batteries installed on towers by interpreting that such equipment is to be treated at par with telecom tower.

Denial of ITC on telecom equipment installed

on telecom towers or other equipment like batteries, diesel generating sets etc installed in temporary shelters close to the telecom towers for running of the telecom equipment is therefore totally baseless and without any precedent.

Follow up representation made to the finance minister with copy to concerned senior officers in MoF, DoT & GST Council requested for the intervention of MoF in getting the issue resolved and requested for issuance of an appropriate clarification to ensure that the telecom operators do not suffer on account of few authorities taking a flawed interpretation.

106. **Amnesty towards settlement/closure of pre-GST litigations - Introduction of Amnesty scheme towards settlement/closure of pre-GST litigations**

Representations are being made with few state governments for seeking an amicable resolution to the long pending litigations which are presently pending at various forums viz Appellate authorities, Tribunal, Hon’ble High Court, and Supreme Court. Same would be of mutual benefit to the Revenue as well as the telecom industry.

State of Maharashtra have announced amnesty scheme by way of budget announcement.

107. **Creating Synergies for Seamless Credit Flow and Economic Growth- Input for Working Group.**

A dedicated Working Group was constituted on Industry and IT under the Chairmanship of Special Secretary, Department of Commerce (DoC). The Terms of Reference of the Working Group include the following:

- a) Sharing of information about current/upcoming capex projects which would require institutional credit
- b) Identifying possibilities of structured finance/ bank credit for funding of projects
- c) Identifying bottlenecks to speedy implementation of projects and initiating steps/ measures to resolve the same

d) Any other matter related to the above

Detailed representation mentioning concerns and recommendations of the members submitted to DoT for further submission.

108. **GST – Representations made to Chairman, CBIC, MoF**

Representation made to with Shri Vivek Johri, Chairman, CBIC, MoF. Following issues were discussed during the meeting.

- a) Clarity that input tax credit (ITC) is available on critical telecom equipment installed on telecom towers.
- b) Multiplicity of Compliance, Audits, Investigations and Litigation for Large Pan India service providers.
- c) Tax on self-supply of service
- d) Service Tax on RoW

109. **GST – Representations made to Member (GST, CX, ST & Legal), CBIC, MoF.**

Representation made to with Shri D.P. Nagendra Kumar, Member (GST, CX, ST & Legal), CBIC in the Ministry of Finance, at North Block. Following issues were discussed during the meeting.

- a) Clarity that input tax credit (ITC) is available on critical telecom equipment installed on telecom towers.
- b) Multiplicity of Compliance, Audits, Investigations and Litigation for Large Pan India service providers.
- c) Removal of GST on License Fees, Spectrum Usage Charges and on Payment of Spectrum acquired in auction.
- d) Service Tax on RoW
- e) Service Tax liability on AGR
- f) Tax on self-supply of service
- g) Issues related to compliances

110. **Custom Duty - Import of goods under preferential rate of duty under FTA with South Korea**

Import of goods under preferential rate of duty under Free Trade Agreement with South

Korea – Submission of Original Certificate of Origin for availing benefit of concessional rate of duty.

Telecom Operators are regularly importing various telecom equipment from South Korea which are used in telecommunication network for providing services to end-users. The goods are presently imported at preferential rate of duty under the FTA with South Korea

Customs officers are insisting on submission of Original Certificate of Origin (COO issued in printed format with ink sign and stamp of issuing authority)

Representation made to MoF / DoT for getting a suitable clarification that the original, digital printouts / Certificate, generated from the system / website of issuing authority in Korea be accepted for verification for granting permission.

111. **Telecom Reforms – Custom Notification dated 25-09-1953**

Major Reforms in Telecom Sector were announced by the Government on September 15, 2021. Under procedural reforms, “Ease of doing business promoted - cumbersome requirement of licenses under 1953 Customs Notification for wireless equipment removed. Replaced with self-declaration”.

DoT vide office memorandum dated October 21, 2021, has issued guidelines with regard to Import of Wireless equipment by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) on the basis of self-declaration

To facilitate it’s implementation, we have requested MoF to rescind Notification No 71-Cus., dated 25th September 1953 or make suitable amendment in the same.

112. **Pre Budget-Recommendations for the year 2022-23**

Detailed representations with regard to key issues related to Direct and Indirect Taxes were sent to the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Telecom etc. Had various meetings with concerned senior officers in the MoF / DoT.

Key issues included in the representation related to regulatory levies were as follows:

- I. Reduction in the SUC
- II. Abolition of the USOF Contribution
- III. Reduction in remaining License Fee
- IV. Review of the AGR definition Prospectively

V. Direct Tax issues

VI. Indirect Tax issues

- a) Service Tax
- b) Entertainment Tax
- c) Custom Duty

VII. Key issues related to GST

DIRECT TAX

Sr. No	Subject	Recommendation
1.	Section 72 - Carry forward of losses	Special regime for Telecom Operators should be introduced in Section 72 wherein the losses can be carried forward & set-off till Sixteen (16) assessment years from existing eight years.
2.	Section 72A - Amendment in conditions of amalgamating companies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provision be amended to bring parity on the carry forward losses and unabsorbed depreciation between the amalgamation and demerger of companies. This would facilitate better reorganization of businesses. b) To bring down the threshold of keeping 75% of book value of fixed assets to 25% for maximum 2 to 3 years' time. The relaxation of this condition would also facilitate conducting environment supporting digital India initiative of Government.
3.	No disallowance in Assessment Order if issue is covered by Jurisdictional High Court	Necessary amendment (or clarification) should be in Section 158A providing that if any issue (or past disallowances) is now covered in Taxpayer's favour by jurisdictional High Court or Tribunal decision (against which Revenue has filed appeal), the same should not result into disallowance by Assessing Officer while passing the Assessment Order subject to submitting undertaking by the taxpayer.
4.	Overlap in definition of 'technical' and 'professional' services under the Income-tax Act, 1961	In the definition of technical services and professional services, it should be clearly brought out by way of explanation that if technical consultancy services are rendered in the course of carrying out business then it would fall in technical services and rate applicable would be 2% while if technical services are rendered in the course of carrying out any profession (such as CA firms, Architects firms, Engineering consulting firms, etc.) then such services would be regarded as professional services and therefore rate applicable would be 10%.
5.	TDS under section 194H on trade margins	A clarification should be issued that such trade margins should not fall within the ambit of TDS provisions. However, if the government still wants to pursue this route for tax collection, it should introduce the TDS rate at 1% instead of the current 5%, which would be closer to the actual tax liability of distributors as margins earned by the distributors are low and they sustain only on volumes.
6.	No TDS under section 194J on payments towards software as a service (SAAS) transferred by reseller without any modification	Benefit of notification no. 21/2012 be extended to the transactions for procurement of software as a service (SAAS) by the customer, wherein the SAAS is procured in a subsequent transfer and the transferor has transferred the SAAS without any modification and TDS has been done on the same either u/s 194J or u/s 195.

Sr. No	Subject	Recommendation
7.	No TDS under section 193 on 'interest on securities' earned by a business trust defined as per section 10(23FC)	An exclusion similar to the one provided in section 194A(3)(xi) should be provided in section 193 – Interest on Securities with respect to non-applicability of withholding tax on any income by way of interest referred to in section 10(23FC).
8.	Additional information in Form 26AS:	To provide Invoice reference number and PAN of the deductor in Form 26AS
9.	Schedule AL – 1 of the Form ITR-6 (details relating to Assets and Liabilities)	To removing the hardship in inserting/ filling the details, it is recommended that import/ export (excel or CSV format) to be provided for Schedules AL-1 (similar to Tax Audit Report Utility).

Sr. No	Issue	Recommendation
Service Tax		
1.	Exemption from levy of Service tax on incremental LF and SUC payable pursuant to the SC decision	Request for issuance of a suitable instruction/ exemption specifying that Service tax is not required to be paid on incremental LF and SUC payable pursuant to the SC decision
2.	Exemption in respect of levy of Service Tax on Right of Way permission granted by the Central Government/State Government and the development authorities	Scope of Exemption Notification No 1/2018 – Service Tax dated 30th November 2018 be extended to cover similar services by the Central/State Government Department and the other Development authority

Entertainment Tax

1.	Entertainment Tax by local authorities	The scope of levy of entertainment tax by local authorities should be restricted to the entertainment provided based on the physical entry only,
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Customs Duty

1.	Clarification(s) regarding activities relating to cable repair/installation operations carried out in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).	We recommend issuing appropriate amendment to the effect that goods entering the Indian Territorial Waters (instead of Indian Customs waters) are not leviable to Integrated Goods and Services Tax. This may kindly be supported by suitable clarificatory circular to maintain consistent position on the issue.
2.	Higher duty of Customs on the telecom equipment disrupting the cost effectiveness of the Telco's	Exemption from the levy of BCD should be granted on the Telecom equipment under CTH 8517 which has been increased w.e.f. October 11, 2018.
3.	Levy of IGST on the value of vessels entering into India temporarily for repairing of undersea cable	Similar to the exemption granted from the levy of BCD, exemption from IGST may also be granted for hassle free importation of such vessels
4.	Change in procedure for claiming benefits under Free Trade Agreement.	Law may be amended to allow the preferential treatment exporting document as per the Treaty provisions and Certificate of Origin and documents on part of the importer to be made less onerous to make it more reasonable.
5.	Consolidation of CTH Entries	The optical fibres used in the telecommunication network be classified under 8544 with Nil rate of Basic Customs Duty.

Sr. No	Issue	Recommendation
6.	Payment of Pre-Deposit and Under Protest Payment through manual TR-6 Challan	In the era of Digitization wherein the entire process of imports is being digitized, such payments should also be routed through ICE GATE.

Goods and Service Tax (GST)

Sr. No	Issue	Recommendation
1.	Exemption from GST on Spectrum payment, license fees, Spectrum usage charge,	<p>Special benefit should be provided to telecom operators in GST by way of exemption on regulatory payments of LF, SUC and spectrum assigned under auction.</p> <p>Alternatively, payment of GST under reverse charge, which otherwise is required to be paid in cash, be allowed to be paid from the balance of the Input Tax Credit.</p>
2.	Ease of doing business – Reduce multiplicity of Compliance, Audits, Investigations and Litigations for Large Pan India service providers	<p>Facilitate Centralized Assessment, Audit Procedure for large tax taxpayer units (LTU) having a pan India turnover of more than Rs 500 Cr AND presence in more than 12 States/Union Territories.</p> <p>This would limit this facility to less than 1% of all Corporates. This will ensure ease of doing business with no corresponding loss of revenue to the Government.</p>
3.	Refund of Accumulated balance in Input Tax Credit	GST regulations may be amended, or notification be issued to allow refund of accumulated ITC to those Companies who are in an investment cycle and unable to recover ITC (similar to an inverted duty structure).
4.	Ambiguity on eligibility to avail ITC available on account of Telecommunication Towers and Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ TSPs should be eligible to claim credit on telecommunication towers ⊙ Explanation to Section 17 should be amended to include telecom towers within the definition of ‘plant and machinery’. <p>Law should be appropriately worded to remove ambiguity which is likely to result in widespread litigation and blockage of much needed working capital. The exclusion of telecom towers from the definition of ‘plant and machinery’ in section 17(5) should be removed.</p>
5.	Clarify that input tax credit is available on critical telecom equipment installed on telecom towers	Request for issuance of an appropriate clarification to ensure that the telecom operators do not suffer on account of few authorities taking a flawed interpretation. Denial of such credits and that too right from the inception of GST will cast a huge financial burden on this critical sector which is playing a very important role in development of basic infrastructure of providing digital connectivity across the country at very affordable tariffs which are the lowest in the world.
6.	No tax on self-supply of service	All Intra-operator transactions between distinct persons (with different GSTINs belonging to one legal entity) of telecom operators should be notified under Rule 32(7) of the CGST Rules, 2017

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LEGAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN
2021-221. **COAI Appeal in MCD Tower Matter – Delhi High Court**

Background: COAI had filed a writ challenging MCD orders and praying inter alia quashing of MCD Office order dated November 20, 2003, Circular dated February 07, 2008 and office order dated April 08, 2010 as these office orders were lacking in competence, ultra vires the DMC Act, unfair, unjust, unreasonable, arbitrary, without power and jurisdiction, unconstitutional and violated Petitioners' rights under Article 14, 19(1) (g) and 21 of the Constitution of India.

On January 30, 2017, a mediation settlement agreement with MCD was signed by COAI, Aircel, Airtel, Idea, Vodafone, RJio, Indus, ATC Viom, GTL Infra and Tower Vision

**KEY TAKEAWAY/S**

On August 18, 2021, South MCD issued a Circular increasing the permission fee for installation of towers. COAI filed an application before Delhi High Court challenging the office order. On September 16, 2021 Hon'ble High Court granted interim relief in COAI application challenging SDMC office order dated August 18, 2021.

On January 20, 2022, North MCD issued a Circular increasing the permission fee for installation of towers. COAI filed an application before Delhi High Court challenging the office order. On March 22, 2022, Hon'ble High Court granted interim relief in COAI application challenging NDMC office order dated January 20, 2022.

2. **PIL in relation to the removal of overhead cables in the city of Bengaluru – Karnataka High Court**

Background: A PIL was filed before Karnataka High Court, Principal Bench at Bengaluru regarding the dangling cables at public places in the city of Bengaluru. The cables are of internet, Cable TV and electricity supply. Petitioner contended that these cables pose a grave threat to the citizens considering the manner in which the same are dangling over the streets and in public places.

On February 24, 2021, the BBMP informed the Court that the action of removal of illegal cables laid on the trees and electrical poles on roads/footpath has already commenced. Court further recorded that apart from the cables and wires for supply of electricity, the real issue is about the dangling cables of Cable Television Networks and private Internet suppliers. Court observed

that if the cables laid by the cable operators without permission of BBMP are found dangling over a public street and footways, apart from setting the criminal law in motion, the BBMP can obviously pull down the cables and held that the BBMP shall take a clear stand on this aspect. Therefore, if cables are left dangling over footways or public streets, it may cause danger to the users of public streets or footways. It is the duty and obligation of BBMP to take action in accordance with law.



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

On September 20, 2021, application seeking impleadment of COAI and interim relief were filed before High Court. On September 24, 2021, Hon'ble High Court allowed the COAI impleadment application.

3. **COAI Petition on Penalty on account of exceeding the EMF limits on shared sites (Circular dated March 29, 2019) – TDSAT**

Background: COAI filed a Petition challenging

the DoT's penalty scheme dated March 29, 2019 regarding non-compliance of prescribed EMF radiation norms in case of a shared site in as much as, inter alia, the DoT has arbitrarily increased the base penalty amount from Rs. 10 lacs to 20 lacs per 'site' per 'incidence' basis and further that the impugned scheme also continues to penalize the innocent Operators, which is, inter alia, unfair, unreasonable, arbitrary, disproportionate and violative of TSPs contractual and legal rights, contra to the Order and Judgement dated November 15, 2018 of TDSAT's Judgment in Petition No. 133 of 2015 – Cellular Operators Associations of India and Ors. Vs Union of India.



KEY TAKEAWAY/S

Application seeking amendment of Petition for placing on record the amended grounds in relation to the calculation of penalty was filed before TDSAT by COAI. On October 07, 2021, Hon'ble TDSAT allowed the amendment application filed by COAI.



12

INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS 2021



Department of Telecommunications (DoT) along with Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) organized India Mobile Congress 2021 (IMC 2021) for the fifth year. Keeping in mind the safety of all parties involved, this edition of India Mobile Congress was a virtual event, scheduled from 08th December through 10th December 2021, with the theme

“Connectivity for the next decade”. IMC 2021 had 23,118 visitors, national and international delegates, over 140 partners & exhibitors, 65 Make in India booths, 10 5G start-ups and more than 226 speakers. The conference had 41 keynote sessions, 21 panel discussions and 13 fireside chats, with session views of 11,535 spanning three days.



The event was supported and encouraged by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji with a futuristic message for Indian telecom industry, and inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnav Ji and was attended by various respected government and industry leaders. These included Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, Shri Devusinh Chauhan, the Secretary (T) & Chairman

DDC, Department of Telecommunication, Shri K Rajaraman, Special Secretary (T) Department of Telecommunication, Smt. Anita Praveen, the Chairman Bharti Enterprises, Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal, the Chairman Reliance Industries Limited, Mr. Mukesh Ambani, the chairman Aditya Birla Group, Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla and the Director General of COAI Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar AVSM**, SM, VSM, ADC, KIGA, along with the who's who of the telecom and allied sectors.



Building foundation for India's Digital Transformation

The focus area for IMC 2021 was 5G and emerging technologies and how they will transform the coming decade. Apart from 5G its use cases and consumer impact, other focus areas were during the event were Internet of Things (IoT), network automation, policy and regulations, digital inclusion, Open RAN, and cyber security. Various areas concerning and impacting telecommunication industry were also discussed during the event such as Gati-Shakti and Atmanirbhar Bharat PLI scheme projects.

IMC 2021 has been a truly global event with rising participants from across the world. We have been fortunate to have witnessed increasing participation from government dignitaries and speakers who define our TMT industry. IMC 2021 was delighted to host stalwarts such as Dr. Ajay Kumar (IAS), Ministry of Defence, Dr. PD Vaghela (IAS), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Dr. Ajay Kumar (IAS), Ministry of Defence, Mr. Nunzio Mirtillo, Ericsson, Mr. Nick McKeown, Intel Corporation, Mr. Mats Granryd,

GSMA, Mr. Nishant Batra, Nokia, Mr. Ankit Agarwal, STL, Mr. Himanshu Kapania, Vi (Vodafone Idea Ltd.), and Mr. Akhil Gupta, Bharti Enterprises Ltd.

Additionally, IMC 2021 also had participation from telco CXOs including Mr. Sanjay Mashruwala, Reliance Jio Infocomm, Mr. Ravinder Takkar, Vi (Vodafone Idea Ltd.), Mr. Ajay Puri, Bharti Airtel Limited, Mr. Jagbir Singh, Vi (Vodafone Idea Limited), Mr. Randeep Sekhon, Bharti Airtel, and Mr. Shyam Mardikar, Reliance Jio etc.

At IMC 2021, we were privileged to have support of our esteemed sponsors from the industry including Ericsson, Dell Technologies, Intel, Red Hat, Reliance Jio Infocomm, Bharti Airtel Ltd, Vodafone Idea Ltd.,

STL, Meta Platforms, Inc., Ciena India, MediaTek, Nokia, Cisco, VMware, among others. Additionally, KPMG was knowledge and George P Johnson was experience and Communications Today was media partners respectively at IMC 2021.

In addition to the yearly marquee event IMC 2021, there were various other virtual events held under IMC Studio and IMC Connect banners throughout the year. Multiple webinars were organised for Nokia and Ciena under IMC Studio. Enterprise Connect program was organized under IMC Connect banner on 25th August 2021 in partnership with Airtel Business, Vodafone Idea Business, Ericsson, and MediaTek themed Reinventing the Enterprise.



13 MEDIA ADVOCACY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH DESK

Significant activities wherein COAI achieved widespread media advocacy

COAI Congratulating New Communication Ministers

COAI congratulated Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw as the new Minister of Communications, Minister of Electronics and Information Technology and Shri Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications. As the industry readies to usher in 5G and catalyse the digital economy, COAI looks forward to working with the new leadership to improve the sector's financial health and seek their crucial support for building the right infrastructure to revolutionize the sector.

THE TIMES OF INDIA



Industry players roll out wishlist for new IT and telecom minister

"As the industry readies to usher 5G and catalyse the digital economy, we look forward to working with the new leadership to improve the financial health of the sector and seek their crucial support for building the right infrastructure to revolutionize the sector," telecom industry body COAI director general S P Kochhar said.

सीओएआई दूरसंचार मंत्राय के नए नेतृत्व के साथ मिल कर क्षेत्र की वित्तीय दशा सुधारने को उत्सुक

डिसक्लेमर: यह आर्टिकल एजेंसी फीड से ऑटो-अपलोड हुआ है। इसे नवभारतटाइम्स.कॉम की टीम ने एडिट नहीं किया है।

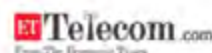
भाषा Updated: 08 Jul 2021, 10:38:00 PM

नयी दिल्ली, आठ जुलाई (भाषा) सेलुलर ऑपरेटर्स एसोसिएशन ऑफ इंडिया (सीओएआई) ने दूरसंचार एवं इलेक्ट्रॉनिक एवं सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय के नए नेतृत्व के साथ मिल कर दूरसंचार क्षेत्र के वित्तीय स्वास्थ्य में सुधार के लिए काम करने की उत्सुकता जतायी है।

संगठन ने संचार एवं मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव और संचार राज्य मंत्री देवू सिंह चौहान को बृहस्पतिवार को मंत्रालय का पदभार संभालने पर बधाई दी है।

संगठन के महाप्रदेशक एस पी कोछर ने बृहस्पतिवार को कहा, "हम नये संचार और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक एवं सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव और संचार राज्य मंत्री देवू सिंह चौहान को पदभार संभालने पर बधाई देते हैं। हमें भारत में दूरसंचार उद्योग के विकास एवं वृद्धि की दिशा में निरंतर सहयोग के लिए उनके साथ काम करने का सौभाग्य मिला है।"

उन्होंने कहा कि ऐसे समय में जब उद्योग 5जी प्रौद्योगिकी की तरफ बढ़ रहा है और डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा दे रहा है, संगठन क्षेत्र की वित्तीय स्थिति को सुधारने के लिए नये नेतृत्व के साथ काम करने को उत्सुक है और क्षेत्र में क्रांति लाने के लिए सही बुनियादी ढांचे के निर्माण की खातिर उनका महत्वपूर्ण सहयोग चाहता है।



Telecom group dials Vaishnaw, Chauhan to restore sector's financial health

The new ministerial leadership has taken charge at a time when industry has been demanding financial incentives, rationalising of levies, and a lower 5G spectrum prices.

NEW DELHI: The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Thursday sought support from the new ministers for deploying infrastructure and improving the financial health of the distressed sector as it readies for next generation (5G) services.



"As the industry readies to usher 5G and catalyse the digital economy, we look forward to working with the new leadership to improve the financial health of the sector and seek their crucial support for building the right infrastructure to revolutionize the sector," SP Kochhar, director general, COAI said.

COAI release Urgent Public Advisory on Fake Messages/Calls

COAI cautioned that mischievous elements send fake messages and call people, threatening to block SIM cards. The industry body urged the general public not to fall for any fraudulent messages and calls and stay vigilant.



Fixing floor prices critical amid financial stress in telecom: COAI

COAI contended that floor price fixation is critical and the need of the hour, given the “major financial stress” in the telecom industry

‘Fixing floor prices critical amid financial stress in telecom’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, August 3

INDUSTRY BODY COAI on Tuesday contended that floor price fixation is absolutely critical and need of the hour, given the “major financial stress” in the telecom industry.

The association — whose members include Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea — said floor prices need to be fixed for data only for an interim period, say two years, and that voice calls and tariffs can be excluded from this. “In the last few years, fixa-

tion of floor prices has become a critical issue and is need of the hour today with telecom industry going through major financial stress,” S P Kochhar, director-general of Cellular Operators’ Association of India (COAI), said in a statement.

Despite the financial constraints faced by them during the pandemic, the telecom service providers continued to plough in significant investments and provide seamless network connectivity to Indians, COAI argued.

Not Considering Floor Price for Mobile Phone Services: Trai Official

Move a blow for Vodafone idea, which has been pushing for a minimum rate

Munazir Abbas
@munazirabbas

New Delhi: The telecom regulator is not considering fixing a floor for mobile phone tariffs, and would continue to keep pricing under for insurance, a senior official said, dealing another blow to Vodafone Idea's repeated pleas to get the authorities to set a minimum rate for mobile phone services.

On Tuesday, industry lobby group Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) however once again pressed on the need for a floor price for data services for an interim period of two years to help the industry recover financially.

“We are not considering tariff floor pricing since the more may not be insurance-friendly,” a Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) official told ET.

The official said Trai would not take any divergent view in the matter since it had already last year rejected the demand from telecom operators for a minimum floor price, at least for data services, to support average revenue per user (ARPU) amid intense competition in the market.

For full report, go to www.economictimes.com



and fully to restore investor confidence.

In fact, the company's latest profit report, for a June 7 quarter that Kulkarni Managing Director of Reliance Jio Infocomm Services, said the company's revenue growth was robust.

COAI also urged the government to consider a two-year interim period for data services.

The industry association said that the government should consider a two-year interim period for data services, and that voice calls and tariffs can be excluded from this.

“In the last few years, fixation of floor prices has become a critical issue and is need of the hour today with telecom industry going through major financial stress,” S P Kochhar, director-general of Cellular Operators’ Association of India (COAI), said in a statement.

Floor prices for data are critical: COAI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Industry association COAI on Tuesday contended that fixing floor prices was ‘absolutely critical’ and the need of the hour, given the “major financial stress” in the telecom industry.

The association said floor prices needed to be fixed for data only for an interim period, say two years, and that voice calls could be excluded. “Telcos have incurred losses because of the downward pricing trend of data tariffs... revenue generation is now essential,” S.P. Kochhar, director-general of Cellular Operators’ Association of India (COAI), said in a statement.

Not Considering Floor Price for Mobile Phone Services: Trai

Munazir.Abbas@timesinternet.in

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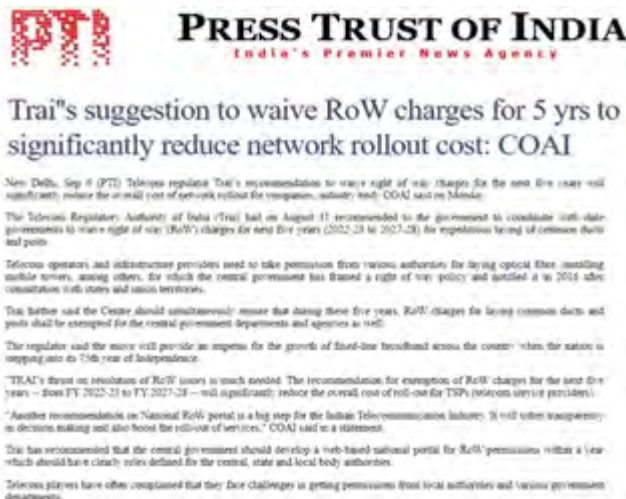
For full report, go to www.economictimes.com

COAI welcomes TRAI's path-breaking recommendations on RoW & Spectrum

COAI welcomed the recommendations of the TRAI on the resolution of various issues like the proposed national RoW portal; exemption of RoW charges for five years for expeditious laying of common ducts; streamlining of RoW permission process with more participation of utility departments and central agencies; uniform restoration charges; auction of mid-band spectrum and assignment of backhaul spectrum. Which will make the 4G services and infrastructure more robust and accelerate the implementation of 5G technology in India.

Trai's suggestion to waive RoW rates for 5 years to slash cost: COAI

Telecom regulator Trai's recommendation to waive right of way (RoW) charges for the next five years will significantly reduce the overall cost of network roll out for companies, industry body COAI said on Monday. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had on August 31 recommended to the government to coordinate with states to waive RoW charges for next five years (2022-23 to 2027-28) for expeditious laying of common ducts and posts. Operators and infrastructure providers need to take permission from various authorities for laying optical fibre, installing mobile towers, among others, for which the Centre has framed a right of way policy and notified it in 2016 after consultation with states and UTs. Trai also said the Centre should simultaneously ensure that during these five years, RoW charges for laying common ducts and posts shall be exempted for the central government departments and agencies as well. **PTI**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
India's Premier News Agency

Trai's suggestion to waive RoW charges for 5 yrs to significantly reduce network rollout cost: COAI

New Delhi, Sep 6 (PTI) Telecom regulator Trai's recommendation to waive right of way charges for the next five years will significantly reduce the overall cost of network rollout for companies, industry body COAI said on Monday.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had on August 31 recommended to the government to coordinate with state governments to waive right of way (RoW) charges for next five years (2022-23 to 2027-28) for expeditious laying of common ducts and posts.

Telecom operators and infrastructure providers need to take permission from various authorities for laying optical fibre, installing mobile towers, among others, for which the central government has framed a right of way policy and notified it in 2016 after consultation with states and union territories.

Trai further said the Centre should simultaneously ensure that during these five years, RoW charges for laying common ducts and posts shall be exempted for the central government departments and agencies as well.

The regulator said the move will provide an impetus for the growth of fixed-line broadband across the country when the nation is stepping into its 75th year of independence.

"Trai's thrust on resolution of RoW issues is much needed. The recommendation for exemption of RoW charges for the next five years - from FY 2022-23 to FY 2027-28 - will significantly reduce the overall cost of roll-out for TSPs (telecom service providers)."

"Another recommendation on National RoW portal is a big step for the Indian Telecommunication industry. It will bring transparency in decision making and also boost the roll-out of services," COAI said in a statement.

Trai has recommended that the central government should develop a web-based national portal for RoW permissions within a year which should have clearly roles defined for the central, state and local body authorities.

Telecom players have often complained that they face challenges in getting permissions from local authorities and various government departments.

ट्राई की सिफारिशों से राहत: सीओएआई

छंडीगढ़ | भारतीय दूरसंचार उद्योग की शीर्ष संस्था सीओएआई ने विभिन्न मुद्दों के समाधान के लिए भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण (ट्राई) द्वारा की गई सिफारिशों का स्वागत किया है। इन सिफारिशों में प्रस्तावित राष्ट्रीय आरओडब्ल्यू पोर्टल, कॉमन डक्ट्स को बिछाने में तेजी लाने के लिए

पांच साल तक आरओडब्ल्यू शुल्क से छूट, विभिन्न विभागों और केंद्रीय एजेंसियों की अधिक भागीदारी के साथ आरओडब्ल्यू मंजूरी प्रक्रिया को सुव्यवस्थित बनाना, एकसमान रिस्टोरेशन शुल्क, मिड-बैंड स्पेक्ट्रम की नीलामी और बैकहॉल स्पेक्ट्रम का आवंटन शामिल है।

COAI welcomed Government's Decision on Bold Telecom Sector Reforms

COAI lauded the bold and forward-looking reforms approved by the Union Cabinet. These reforms were much-needed structural, and procedural announced by the Hon'ble Minister of Communications, Ashwini Vaishnav will spur the industry's growth, infuse liquidity, encourage competition, and protect the common man's interests.



Telecom package to provide some relief to stressed sector: Industry body COAI

New Delhi, Sep 15 (PTI) Telecom industry body COAI lauded telecom relief package approved by the Cabinet on Wednesday, which will be implemented prospectively and provide a breather to the sector that is reeling under heavy stress.

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Director General S P Kochhar said in a statement, "On the face of it, we welcome the prospective directions of the package announced, which is aligned with our long-standing asks. Going forward, this will give some relief to our greatly stressed sector for sure."

Kochhar added that the industry takes it as an indicator of the government thinking and is keenly awaiting rationalisation of costs and processes of 5G roll-out. "Structured comments will follow after the package is studied in detail."

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said the Cabinet has allowed a 4-year moratorium on all dues that telecom operators have to pay to the government, but it will have to be paid within the 40 years timeframe as decided earlier.

KS Legal & Associates Managing Partner Sonam Chaudhary said, "This will give troubled telecom carriers like Vodafone Idea much-needed breathing room as they pay crores of rupees in unsecured previous statutory dues. The liability is postponed rather than totally written off."

Package will provide relief to stressed sector: COAI

NEW DELHI: Telecom industry body COAI lauded telecom relief package which will be implemented prospectively and provide a breather to the sector that is reeling under heavy stress. Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) director general S P Kochhar said, "On the face of it, we welcome the prospective directions of the package announced, which is aligned with our long-standing asks. Going forward, this will give some relief to our greatly stressed sector." Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said the Cabinet has allowed a 4-year moratorium on all dues that telecom operators have to pay to the government. PTI

4-year moratorium on spectrum, AGR dues top telecom package

100% FDI via automatic route to also benefit beleaguered players

SRONENDRA SINGH
New Delhi, September 15

The government has finally come to the rescue of the beleaguered telecom industry and announced a mega relief-cum-reform package. The Union Cabinet-cleared package includes a four-year moratorium on spectrum and Average Gross Revenue (AGR) dues, as also a liberalised investment regime that allows 100 per cent foreign direct investment (from 49 per cent now) through the automatic route, except from China and bordering countries.

The much-awaited package had been in the works for the past few months especially after Vodafone Idea (VIL) came to the brink of collapse as losses mounted and debt piled up to around ₹1.8-lakh crore.

The government will have an option to convert any amount pertaining to the deferred payment due into equity at the end of the moratorium/deferment period.

The government has also done away with the Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC), a substantial levy on telecom service providers (TSPs), from future auctions and increased the tenure of spectrum of holdings from the existing 20 years to 30 years. This is valid

only for future spectrum auctions.

It has also changed the definition of AGR to remove non-telecom revenues, which will help reduce the TSPs' payment burden. The government has ensured that the stressed TSPs have sufficient cash-in-hand and said that for auctions henceforth, no bank guarantees will be required to secure instalment payments.

Revenue neutral for govt

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that "The telecom relief package is revenue neutral for the government. These are expected to protect and generate employment opportunities, promote healthy competition, protect interests of consumers, infuse liquidity, encourage investment and reduce the regulatory burden on TSPs."

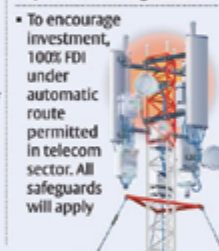
Reacting to the Cabinet decisions, Kumar Mangalam Birla, former Chairman of Vodafone Idea, said, "These reforms demonstrate the government's firm commitment to ensuring healthy growth of the industry."

New beginning: Voda CEO
Nick Read, CEO, Vodafone Group, who had recently met the Telecom Minister, said the decisions will mark the beginning of a "new era of India's di-

Relief and reforms

- Rationalisation of Adjusted Gross Revenue: Non-telecom revenue will be excluded on prospective basis from the definition of AGR
- Huge reduction in Bank Guarantee (BG) requirements (80% against licence fee and other similar levies. No requirements for multiple BGs in different Licenced Service Areas (LSAs) regions in the country. Instead, one BG will be enough
- From October 1, 2021, delayed payments of licence fee (LF)/Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) will attract interest rate of SBI's MCLR plus 2% instead of MCLR plus 4%; interest compounded annually instead of monthly; penalty and interest on penalty removed
- For auctions held henceforth, no BGs will be required to secure instalment payments

- In future auctions, tenure of spectrum increased from 20 to 30 years
- Surrender of spectrum will be permitted after 10 years for spectrum acquired in the future auctions
- No Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for spectrum acquired in future spectrum auctions
- Additional SUC of 0.5% for spectrum sharing removed



gital ambitions and for VIL's continued contribution to creating an inclusive and sustainable digital society to the benefit of all citizens'.

Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Airtel, said: "What lies ahead is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build the digital infrastructure that is a catalyst for the digital aspirations of over one billion Indians."

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Jio Infocomm, said that "These are timely steps towards strengthening

India's telecom sector... The government's telecom sector reforms will encourage us to bring newer and greater benefits to our customers..."

"These steps would go a long way in relieving the financial stress the sector is facing, boosting investments, encouraging healthy competition and in offering choice to customers. The announcement is aligned with the telecom industry's long-standing asks," Cellular Operators Association of India said.

COAI Press Statement on Sharing of Infrastructure

COAI welcomed the amendment in License Conditions further enhancing sharing of active infrastructure between telecom operators. The allowing of sharing of core network elements such as MSC, HLR, IN etc. among the TSPs will reduce the cost for the TSPs and facilitate the faster rollout of services and will help a long way in enhancing digital connectivity in India

DoT amends norms: Active infra sharing among telcos allowed



TELECOM OPERATORS will now be able to share active infrastructure, including core networks following an amendment made by the department of telecommunications (DoT) in the

licence norms, reports PTI. The move is expected to reduce capital and operational expenditure of telecom operators like Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. DoT has also changed the commercial VSAT licence rules to enable use of satellite connectivity to provide backend connectivity for mobile networks. **PAGE 4**

DoT AMENDS NORMS TO ALLOW TELCOS SHARE ACTIVE INFRA

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Telecom operators will now be able to share active infrastructure, including core networks following amendment made by Department of Telecom in the licence norms.

The move is expected to reduce capital and operational expenditure of telecom operators like Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Department of Telecom (DoT) has also changed commercial VSAT licence rules to enable use of satellite connectivity to provide backend connectivity for mobile networks.

"The Licensee may share its own active and passive infrastructure for providing other services authorised to it under any other telecom licence issued by licensor," the new clause added in the licence norms said.

Earlier, only mobile towers and some active electronic components in the network were allowed to be shared among telecom service providers (TSPs).

Industry body COAI said there was a long pending demand by telcos to allow sharing of all active components in the network.

"At present, active infrastructure sharing was allowed to TSPs only for antenna, feeder cable, Node B and transmission systems.

"The allowing of sharing of core network elements such as MSC, HLR, IN etc. among TSPs will reduce the cost for TSPs and facilitate faster rollout of services. This is a very progressive step which will go a long way in enhancing digital connectivity in India," COAI Director General SP Kochhar said.

भाषा प्रेस ट्रस्ट ऑफ़ इंडिया

भारत की प्रमुख संचार समिति

दूरसंचार विभाग ने कंपनियों को आपस में बुनियादी ढांचा साझा करने के लिए नियमों में संशोधन किया

नयी दिल्ली, 24 सितंबर (भाषा) दूरसंचार विभाग द्वारा लाइसेंस नियमों में किए गए संशोधन के बाद अब दूरसंचार सेवा प्रदाता कंपनियों को नेटवर्क सहित सक्रिय बुनियादी ढांचे को एक-दूसरे के साथ साझा कर पाएंगी।

इस कदम से रिलायंस जियो, भारती एयरटेल और वोडाफोन आइडिया जैसी दूरसंचार सेवा प्रदाताओं के पूंजी और परिचालन व्यय में कमी आने की उम्मीद है।

दूरसंचार विभाग (डीओटी) ने मोबाइल नेटवर्क के लिए बैकएंड कनेक्टिविटी प्रदान करने की खातिर उपग्रह संपर्क के इस्तेमाल को सक्षम करने के लिए वाणिज्यिक वीसैट लाइसेंस नियमों में भी बदलाव किया है।

लाइसेंस मानदंडों में जोड़े गए नये खंड के अनुसार, "लाइसेंसधारक लाइसेंसधारी द्वारा जारी किसी अन्य दूरसंचार लाइसेंस के तहत उसे अधिकृत अन्य सेवाएं प्रदान करने के लिए अपने स्वयं के सक्रिय और निष्क्रिय बुनियादी ढांचे को साझा कर सकता है।"

Rationalization of Delayed Payment of License Fee (LF)

COAI appreciated the step of rationalization of interest rates on delayed payment of License Fee (LF) and any other dues under the Licence, removal of penalty and interest on penalty as it will ease the financial stress and will help promoting Ease of Doing Business in the telecom sector

Still to Notify all Reform Measures

►► From Page 1

"We appreciate the step of rationalisation of interest rates on delayed payment of licence fee (LF) and any other dues under the licence, removal of penalty and interest on penalty. We welcome this step towards easing the financial stress and promoting ease of doing business in the telecom sector," COAI director general SP Kochhar said in a statement.

Communications and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had called the existing practice of compounding interest rate on a monthly basis "unjustified," in an interview to ET on the day the reforms had been announced. He told ET that more reforms are in the pipeline.

Out of the entire ₹1.47 lakh crore adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues imposed on the telecom industry, as much as 74% amounted to interest and penalties, as per government calculations. The demand of these AGR dues pushed loss-making Vodafone Idea — with AGR dues of

over ₹58,000 crore — to the brink. It has paid nearly ₹8,000 crore of the demand.

The DoT also deleted the clause under which telcos were charged a penalty equivalent to 50% of the shortfall in licence fee payments.

IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had called the existing practice of compounding interest rate on a monthly basis "unjustified"

The penalty was imposed if this was more than 10% of the payable licence fees. The DoT is still in the process of notifying all the telecom reforms announced by the government on Sept 15, including the option to defer payment of AGR and spectrum fees by four years. Other measures include the option given to telcos for converting dues and interest into government equity.

DoT amends telecom licence norms to relax penal provisions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, October 2

THE DOT HAS amended licence norms to rationalise the interest rate for delayed payment of licence fee, a move that is expected to ease financial burden on the telecom sector and promote ease of doing business.

The department will now charge 2% interest above the one-year marginal cost of lending rate (MCLR) of State Bank of India for delay in payment of licence fees or any other statutory dues and the interest will be compounded annually. Earlier, telecom firms were required to pay 4% interest above the one-year MCLR of SBI and the interest was compounded monthly. "Any delay in payment of licence fee or any other dues payable under the licence beyond the stipulated period will attract interest at a rate which will be 2% above the one-year MCLR of SBI existing as on the beginning of the financial year (namely April

1) in respect of the licence fees or any other dues pertaining to the said financial year," the amendment said.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has removed the licence clause under which telcos were charged a penalty equivalent to 50% of the short payment they made for licence fee. The penalty was imposed if short payment was more than 10% of the payable licence fees.

The amendment has come into effect from October 1. The move is part of telecom reforms announced by the government in September 2021. The old rules were one of the main reasons for pushing incumbent players into stress after the Supreme Court's verdict on adjusted gross revenue that upheld the government stand and asked telecom operators to pay ₹1.47 lakh crore statutory dues. Telecom industry body COAI said the move will ease financial stress on the sector and promote ease of doing business.

INTEREST TO BE COMPOUNDED ANNUALLY

DoT Cuts Interest Rate on Delayed Fee Payments

To charge 2% interest above the one-year MCLR of SBI for delay in clearing licence fees, other statutory dues

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has amended licence conditions, reducing the interest rate for delayed payment of licence fee and scrapping elements such as penalty and interest on penalty. The move is part of the broader reforms announced earlier this month in a bid to ease the financial burden on the telecom sector and retain the market structure, which currently consists of three private and one public telco, as well as to promote ease of doing business.

According to the statement issued by the DoT, the telecom department will now charge 2% interest above the one-year marginal cost of lending rate (MCLR) of State Bank of India for delays in payment of licence fees or any other statutory dues, and the interest

Relief for Telcos

DoT cuts interest rate for delayed payment of licence fee, scraps penalty and interest on penalty

Out of the ₹1.47 lakh cr AGR dues imposed on telecom industry, as much as 74% amounted to interest and penalties

Industry body COAI welcomes rationalisation of interest rates, penalty waiver



will be compounded annually.

Earlier, telecom firms were required to pay 4% interest above the one-year MCLR of SBI. Also the interest component which was charged on a monthly basis will now be charged annually.

The amendments have come into effect from October 1.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) grouping said the move will ease financial stress on the sector and promote ease of doing business.

Still to Notify all Reform Measures ►► 6

Amendments in FDI, SACFA & BANK Guarantees

COAI welcomed the steps taken by the Government to allow 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) under automatic route in the telecom sector, the simplification of the SACFA clearance process for installing towers and amendment in the UAS License Agreement & Unified License Agreement for Rationalizing of Bank Guarantees will help the industry to build a robust telecom sector for new India

Centre allows 100% FDI in telecom via automatic route

OUR BUREAU

The government on Tuesday notified its decision to permit 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) under the automatic route in the telecom services sector subject to certain conditions.

Till now, only 49 per cent of FDI was allowed through the automatic route and anything beyond that had to come via the government route. Telcos, including infrastructure providers, will be covered under the new FDI regime.

Reforms package

The 100 per cent FDI was part of the telecom reform package approved by the Cabinet on September 15. Other reforms included a four-year moratorium on AGR (Average Gross Revenue) dues, and an option for the government to convert dues into equity post the moratorium period.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), in a statement, said foreign investment in telecom



services will be subject to the condition of Press Note 3 of 2020. According to Press Note 3, an entity of a country which shares a land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the government route.

The notification read: "All telecom services, including telecom infrastructure providers, Category I, via Basic, Cellular, Unified Access Services, Unified License Access services, Unified License, National/International Long Distance, Commercial VSAT, Public Mobile Radio Trunked Services (PMRTS), Global Mobile Personal Communications Services (GMPCS), all types of ISP li-

ceses, and such other services as may be permitted by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)."

Ending uncertainties

The licensing, security and any other terms and conditions, as specified by DoT from time to time, will be observed by licensee/entities providing services above, as well as investors, it said. Accordingly, cases requiring government approval under Press Note 3 provisions will continue to be in place, it added.

According to analysts, going forward, the steps taken will clearly take away some of the uncertainties in the sector and, overall, it should lead to a more stable regime and help to attract more investments, now that 100 per cent FDI through the automatic route is approved.

"The FDI approval will help industry build a robust telecom sector for new India," said SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India.

Government allows 100% FDI in telecom via automatic route

The telecom department has also reduced performance and financial bank guarantee requirements of telecom operators by 80 per cent

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday allowed 100 per cent foreign direct investment in the telecom sector through automatic route to promote ease of doing business in the industry.

The telecom department has also reduced performance and financial bank guarantee requirements of telecom operators by 80 per cent.

Earlier, 100 per cent of FDI was allowed, of which 49 per cent of investment was permitted through automatic route.

According to the DPIIT's press note, 100 per cent FDI is permitted across all kinds of telecom services and infrastructure providers.

In the Press Note 3 (2020) series, the government has amended the 100 per cent FDI cap in the sector to 'Automatic Route'.

The move will provide relief for Vodafone Idea, as it has been looking to raise funds from overseas to support its business.

The Department of Telecommunications, Strategic and Financial Bank Guarantee Requirements of Telecom Operators (SACFA).



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The move will provide relief for Vodafone Idea, as it has been looking to raise funds from overseas to support its business.

The Department of Telecommunications, Strategic and Financial Bank Guarantee Requirements of Telecom Operators (SACFA).

Under the amended norms

in cases where bank guarantee (BG) has been furnished due to any court order or are subject to any litigation, the licence amendment note said.

In the case of UASL, there were three different amounts of FDI that were charged - Rs 50 crore for each A category telecom circle, Rs 25 crore for B service area and Rs 5 crore for C category circles that has been included to 20 per cent through the amendment.

The FDI in and FDI of existing licensees shall be revised to 20 per cent of the current total amount held by the licensee. The amendment note for UASL said.

The amendment will apply to telecom operators, who are currently going through the liquidation process.

These amendments are part of the telecom reform announced by the government in mid-September.

The DoT has also issued rules for clearing mobile tower installations in the country.

Now, the clearance of mobile tower installation will be done through self-declaration and an automated time-bound manner through the land search portal.

"System will clear cases automatically and applicants can download the system generated SACFA clearance from the Self-Service Portal of DoT. Cases not meeting auto-verified criteria will be processed by members through their integrated systems and will be cleared within 30 days, an official memorandum said.

The new rules have been issued along with the department amending norms to include performance and financial bank guarantee requirements of telecom operators by 80 per cent, according to the licence amendment note issued on Wednesday.

Telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said the FDI approval will help the industry to build a robust telecom sector for new India.

"Through the amendment in SACFA norms, telecom service providers will be freed off the huge burden of Bank Guarantees and will enable the availability of more funding for the expansion of the Telecom Network and build a Digital Connected India.

Further, SACFA clearance based self-declaration will facilitate ease of doing business & will help in the faster rollout of services to the citizens," COAI director general SP Kochhar said.

DoT allows telcos to digitise CAFs

COAI applauded the new directive issued by the Government on the digitization of Customer Application Forms (CAF) by the telecom service providers. These guidelines form part of a landmark decision that will assist TSPs in maintaining & streamlining processes and will result in the creation of an electronic database that will enable the ease of doing business, aid faster delivery of services and also eco-friendly initiative to have Digital CAFs

PTI
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DoT allows telcos to digitise CAFs

New Delhi, Oct 11 (PTI) Telecom operators have been allowed to digitise customer application forms, a move that is expected to ease updation of subscribers' data.

The provision also frees telecom operators from storing paper customer application forms (CAF) in warehouses.

"Telecom service providers (TSPs) are permitted to store the digitally scanned/coloured copies of the paper based CAF documents. Digitally scanned copies of the CAF documents must be maintained for all the active customers," the Department of Telecom guidelines for digitisation of paper CAFs said on Monday.

The CAF documents comprise CAF along with proof of identity and address documents.

Telecom operators will have to store digitally scanned copies of CAF documents for a period of three years in case of migrated and disconnected subscribers.

"Paper CAF documents can be destroyed after digitisation unless directed otherwise by the license law enforcement agencies/courts," the guidelines said.

Business Standard

DoT allows telecom operators to digitise customer application forms

Telecom operators have been allowed to digitise customer application forms, a move that is expected to ease updation of subscribers' data

Telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Director General SP Kochhar said the nation is moving forward into a digital era, and these guidelines form part of a landmark decision that will assist telecom operators in maintaining and streamlining processes.

"It will result in the creation of an electronic database that will enable the ease of doing business, aid faster delivery of services and also eco-friendly initiative to have Digital CAFs," Kochhar said.

Gati Shakti announcement by Government of India

COAI congratulated and applauded the Government of India for the launch of the country's ambitious project Gati Shakti, a multi-modal connectivity plan which is aimed to expedite the infrastructural project implementation, thereby accelerating economic growth

प्रधानमंत्री गति शक्ति मिशन दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास को देगा बढ़ावा

चंडीगढ़। भारतीय दूरसंचार उद्योग के प्रतिनिधि निकाय, सीओएआई ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को महत्वकांक्षी परियोजना गति शक्ति का शुभारंभ करने के लिए बधाई दी है, जो एक मल्टी-मॉडल कनेक्टिविटी प्लान है, जिसका उद्देश्यक ढांचागत परियोजनाओं के कार्यान्वयन में तेजी लाना और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देना है। डिजिटलीकरण और संचार पर अपनी निर्भरता के साथ, गति शक्ति भारत के दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे को एक बड़ा प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करेगा। पूरी तरह से डिजिटल रूप से जुड़े देश का निर्माण करने के लिए, यह पहल आवश्यक प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करेगी जो उन विभिन्न उद्योगों के बीच, जो प्रमुख मल्टी-रीच परियोजनाओं पर साथ मिलकर काम कर रहे हैं, सूचना के निर्बाध प्रवाह को बढ़ावा देगी। पीएम गति शक्ति मास्ट र प्लान सटीक जानकारी और मार्गदर्शन भी प्रदान करेगा, जो परियोजनाओं को एक निर्धारित समय-सीमा के भीतर पूरा करने, नीति निर्माण को प्रभावी बनाने और सरकारी खर्च में बढोतरी की किसी भी संभावना को खत्म करने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है। लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल डा. एसपी कोचर, महानिदेशक, सीओएआई, ने कहा, सीओएआई को इस बात की खुशी है कि सरकार 16 विभिन्न मंत्रालयों के डाटा का उपयोग करने जा रही है और इस पूरे डाटा को बीआईएसएजी-एन द्वारा तैयार किए गए डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म पर रखा जाएगा। मजबूत वायरलाइन और वायरलेस ब्रॉडबैंड कनेक्टिविटी द्वारा सक्षम डिजिटलीकरण और डिजिटल प्रौद्योगिकियां महत्वकांक्षी गति शक्ति - मल्टी-मॉडल कनेक्टिविटी के लिए राष्ट्रीय मास्टर प्लान, के तहत किए जाने वाले कार्यों की आधारशिला होगी, जिसका उद्देश्य राष्ट्रीय बुनियादी ढांचा परियोजनाओं का समन्वित और एकीकृत नियोजन और निष्पादन करना है।

'विकास को बढ़ावा देगा सी.ओ.ए.आई.'

चंडीगढ़, 20 अक्टूबर (स.ह.): सी.ओ.ए.आई. ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को महत्वकांक्षी परियोजना गति शक्ति का शुभारंभ करने के लिए बधाई दी है। डिजिटलीकरण व संचार पर निर्भरता के साथ गति शक्ति भारत के दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे को बड़ा प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करेगा। मल्टी-रीच परियोजनाओं पर साथ मिलकर काम कर रहे हैं, सूचना के निर्बाध प्रवाह को बढ़ावा देगी। यह जानकारी लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल डॉ. एस.पी. कोचर, महानिदेशक, सी.ओ.ए.आई. ने दी है।

शक्ति मिशन दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास को बढ़ावा देगा: सीओएआई

मास्टर प्लान | चंडीगढ़
सीओएआई ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को महत्वकांक्षी परियोजना गति शक्ति का शुभारंभ करने के लिए बधाई दी है। यह योजना एक मल्टी-मॉडल कनेक्टिविटी प्लान है, जिसका उद्देश्य ढांचागत परियोजनाओं के कार्यान्वयन में तेजी लाना और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देना है। लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल डा. एसपी कोचर, महानिदेशक, सीओएआई, ने कहा, सीओएआई को इस बात की खुशी है कि सरकार 16 विभिन्न मंत्रालयों के डाटा का उपयोग करने जा रही है और इस पूरे डाटा को बीआईएसएजी-एन द्वारा तैयार किए गए डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म पर रखा जाएगा। गति शक्ति भारत के दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे को एक बड़ा प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करेगा।

COAI advocacy around budget

COAI shared a pre-budget recommendations press release highlighting the expectations of the industry regarding The abolition of the USO fund, License Fee contribution to be brought down from 3% to 1%, and Reduction in SUC rate by 3% for all TSPs

Also shared post-budget comments through a press release. Appreciated Government's focus on digital connectivity and expressing disappointment toward long-standing demands remaining unmet



IMC 2021

India Mobile Congress was organized on the 8th 9th 10th of December. The three-day event was closely tracked and monitored. Post-event release was disseminated on all three days highlighting major announcements during IMC 2021 session



Telcos seek cheaper spectrum for survival

To become sustainable in the long run, the telecom industry is seeking adequate spectrums at reasonable prices with easy payment norms, rationalisation of taxes and levies and reduction in burden on the companies due to old litigations, a top official of Vodafone Idea Ltd (VI) said on Thursday.

Vi managing director and chief executive officer Ravinder Takkar while speaking at India Mobile Congress said recent reforms announced by the government are steps towards addressing financial stress and legacy issues in the sector.

"Looking at the decade ahead, there is a need to make industry sustainable in the long run...towards this future a few more steps taken more quickly will achieve this goal. Industry players are talking about first making adequate spectrum available at reasonable prices at easy payment terms. Second, rationalizing taxes and levies in line with the recommendation of NDCP 2018 and third, reducing the heavy burden of old legacy litigation in the sector," Takkar said.

He said once these issues are resolved, the industry will look at improving average revenue per user



STL unveils its 5G-from-India offering at IMC 2021

ANI | Updated: Dec 11, 2021 14:41 IST

Mumbai (Maharashtra) [India], December 11 (ANI/PR Newswire): STL (NSE: STLTECH), an industry-leading integrator of digital networks, today unveiled its 5G portfolio at the IMC 2021. With its purpose of transforming billions of lives through digital networks, a DNA of innovation and a portfolio of more than 630 patents, STL is building deployment methodologies and a 5G architecture that ensures seamless wired and wireless connectivity.

One of the first indigenous companies with 100 per cent homegrown 5G-ready solutions, the company combines the power of optical, wireless, virtualisation, and deployment methodology to build robust 5G infrastructure for India and the world.

STL's 5G portfolio caters to the needs of leading network creators across the globe.

"Since high capacity in limited duct space is crucial for 5G networks, STL has developed Opticonn, its optical connectivity solution that includes high fibre count (6912 fibre) Celesta Intelligently Bonded Ribbon [IBR] Cable with Stellar™ bend-insensitive fibre and optical interconnect products like IBR compatible Splice enclosures for fast and seamless installation and quality.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES | Industry

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Transforming lives of ordinary citizens key to digital connectivity: K Rajaraman

Updated Dec 08, 2021, 02:44 PM IST

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Synopsis

The key role of digital connectivity led by next-generation and advanced technologies such as fifth-generation (5G) technology, artificial intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR) and robotics, is to transform the lives of 1.38 billion Indians, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) secretary K Rajaraman said.

World Looks to India for Affordable & Sustainable Tech Solutions: Modi

Govt says it's open to new ideas, seeks suggestions on framework for trusted sources, gear

World Looks to India for Affordable & Sustainable Tech Solutions: Modi
Govt says it's open to new ideas, seeks suggestions on framework for trusted sources, gear

NEW DELHI Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the world is looking to India for affordable and sustainable tech solutions. He said the government is open to new ideas and seeks suggestions on a framework for trusted sources and gear.

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GSMA & COAI collaboration for advancing Mobile telecommunication in India

COAI and GSMA organized a webinar highlighting the importance of small cell deployment is critical for the 5G roll-out

COAI signed an MoU with GSMA to advance mobile telecommunications in India and collaborate on “areas of mutual interest”



COAI to begin pilot deployment of 5G small cells

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

TELECOM Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Thursday urged Cellular Operators Association of India to carry out a pilot project for the deployment of small cells in the country to check call drop or network congestion issue after rolling out 5G network.

While addressing COAI, Chairman of TRAI PD Vaghela asked COAI to form a team from its members and carry out four pilot projects one each covering a port, airport, metro line and a congested city area.

A small cell is an umbrella term used to describe a miniature radio access point (AP)

or wireless network base station that enhances cellular network coverage and capacity in areas. In a simple term, a small cell is a 5G tower, and has the same characteristics of the classic base stations.

On its part, COAI on Thursday informed that it, along with GSMA, had conducted a survey of stakeholder compa-

nies in India to examine the challenges to improve small deployment in the country. After the survey, it had made 14 suggestions ranging from simplifying procedures for small deployment to granting easy access to street furniture, to updating and ensuring uniform implementation of the 2016 Right of Way Rules.

COAI on altimeter issue in C band

COAI advocated for 5G being unsafe for aviation during the row of 5G being unsafe for aviation through a press statement saying 5G and aviation are safe to co-exist. Also, there is a gap of 530 MHz (from 3670 MHz to 4200 MHz) in the transmission of frequencies



5G & aviation can co-exist: COAI

AMEESH PHADMIS
Mumbai, 12 January

Commercial 5G service and aviation can safely co-exist, Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) said, allaying concerns about 5G signal interference with aircraft systems.

COAI, which represents telecom companies, issued a statement on Wednesday in reaction to a letter by Federation of Indian Pilots

that raised the issue about possible interference of 5G signals with radio altimeter in an aircraft. Altimeters measure altitude above terrain, helps pilots in situational awareness during low visibility and also provides inputs for onboard systems such as the traffic collision avoidance system.

"We understand the concerns raised by Federation of Indian Pilots, and the matter has been highlighted in the past as well wherein the

authorities have found the issue of spectrum interference uncorroborated. There is a gap of 530 MHz (from 3670 MHz to 4200 MHz) in the transmission of frequencies, thus, making it safe for 5G and aviation to co-exist," COAI director general S P Kochhar said.

Radio altimeters operate within 4.2 to 4.4 GHz (4200-4400 MHz). Aviation bodies in the US have been expressing fears that telecom services using spectrum in 3.7-3.98

GHz could cause interference to altimeters.

In India, while 5G trials are underway in the 700 MHz, 3.5 GHz, and 26 GHz bands, the Department of Telecommunications has decided to allocate new frequency bands in the 526-698 MHz band for 5G services as well. The government expects commercial rollout of services later this year and spectrum auctions are expected in July.

5G interference in aviation uncorroborated: COAI

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Wednesday said that the issue of 5G spectrum interference raised by the Federation of Indian Pilots is uncorroborated. The industry body said there is enough gap of 530 MHz (from 3670 MHz to 4200 MHz) in the transmission of frequencies, making it safe for 5G and avia-

tion to co-exist.

"The matter has been highlighted in the past as well wherein the authorities have found the issue of spectrum interference uncorroborated. Thus, making it safe for 5G and aviation to co-exist. In the post-pandemic world, connectivity is an important issue and a bigger asset for the economy. It is essential that the country has the required spectrum to meet

the escalating demands for wireless connectivity," said SP Kochhar, DG, COAI. The 6,000-member Federation of Indian Pilots, on Jan 4, wrote to Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and requested him to ask the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to develop a plan that enables the safe and efficient implementa-

tion of fifth generation (5G) mobile communications networks in the C-band, the frequency band that is allocated for commercial telecommunications via satellites. Their concern came in the wake of the global aviation industry raising serious concerns over the potential interference of 5G wireless signals with sensitive aircraft equipment like radio altitude meters.

Advocacy around Reduction in Spectrum Pricing

COAI advocated against high spectrum pricing through Conceptualizing articulate, data-driven and insightful authored articles highlighting 5G technology and the importance of reduction in spectrum pricing. The articles were exclusively published in online and print through The Free Press Journal, Tele.net, and Communication Today.

Advocacy through media interaction with major Wires like Press Trust of India and Cat A publication for a reduction in spectrum price and issuing a media statement on TRAI's recommendation on Auction of spectrum in frequency bands identified for 5G

THE FREE PRESS JOURNAL
SINCE 1928

Why 5G, new-age tech will together drive efficient data management

Data may be the new oil but there is a key difference. The former is a scarce resource, the latter's abundance is limitless. Estimates suggest that by 2025 every day 463 exabytes of data will be generated globally. From social media to enterprises to sensors, data is multiplying. Are we ready to handle this wealth of information or will it flow down the drain?

Despite impressive strides in digitalization, in India, data management is often manual and inefficient. In the recent past, most data were collected, processed, and stored in physical format. Some organizations, especially government departments, still follow this method of data collection and distribution. Physical files travel from one office to another with no data security, efficiency, or transparency.

5G Roadmap to 5G
Hopes, expectations and challenges in roll-out

By General Dr. S.P. Kothekar, General Manager, Cellular Operators Association of India

India has the second largest mobile network base in the world with 1.24 billion active subscribers. It aspires to become the world's second largest smartphone market by 2025. The year 2022 will see the roll-out for the industry as when a long term path is set for the commercial roll-out of 5G. There is a lot to look forward to this year. There was an anticipation for the new set of releases, which will finally end the impasse around spectrum pricing and data management for 5G roll-out in the near future.

The year 2022 has been a defining year for the industry. It would be remembered for milestone releases such as the relief package announced in September 2021, allaying 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) under the automatic route in the telecom sector, reduction of financial bank guarantees, and performance bank guarantee requirements, amendments to the Indian Telegraph Right of Way (ITRW) Rules, benefits for companies under the Rs. 10 billion production-linked incentive scheme for building network products, development in 5G trials for 5G roll-out, among others, which changed the face of the telecom sector.

The relief package was quick to allay the financial health of telecom service providers (TSPs), giving them the necessary impetus to inspire confidence in the sector for making investments. It not only gave operators a chance at survival but also presented a bright horizon that would have been darkened for the sector.

COVID-19 has pulled the world towards digitalization and accelerated the adoption of digital technology. It has helped in re-examined and honed in on-line, e-commerce and e-learning in various, completely reimagining the business paradigm. Today, we stand at the threshold of a digital revolution estimated by 5G. It is the backbone to the future growth and socio-economic development of our country, which aspires to become a \$1 trillion economy by 2031. The world's mobile use has been rising to grow in the future as more and more people rely on high-speed connectivity for their daily activity. Therefore, there is a need to spur investment in this area to produce a reliable and affordable broadband ecosystem that makes every corner of the nation to provide access. Through the National Broadband Mission 2019, the government has initiated

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High 5G spectrum prices may push players up against the wall: COAI DG

High 5G spectrum prices may push players up against the wall: COAI DG

Apex telecom industry body COAI has asserted that spectrum pricing should be kept conducive to market conditions as 5G entails upfront capital investments with monetisation spread over a long-haul, and pricing radiowaves high will only push the players up against the wall.

The stage is set for **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** to come out with its recommendations on 5G spectrum pricing and other modalities for upcoming auctions, and the announcement from the sector watchdog is expected anytime now.

RELATED

- Govt working on new law to address all spectrum issues
- Govt returns bank guarantees to Voda Idea, Airtel
- BSNL awards Rs 550-crore contract to TCS for setting up 6,000 4G sites: Report
- CCCA approves one-time option to PSUs to surrender non-operational coal mines

A bird's eye view of India's telecom sector in 2022

Robust telecom infrastructure has helped the country sail through difficult times for the past two months. From creating a seamless infrastructure for organisations to work from home to digital classes across cities, the telecom industry emerged conspicuously in times of social distancing and kept the wheels rolling for the country's economy and the world at large.

The year 2022 is going to be a turning point for India's telecom sector, especially after the slew of announcements made by Hon'ble Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the budget. With these announcements in action, the year will also see major new trends gaining ground.

Increase in data consumption
Since 2020, data consumption has increased manifold, and is also bound to increase in the coming years. Reports suggest that sub-density in rural subscribers reached 59.58 percent in November 2021 as against 59.16 percent the previous year. The slower population of the country presents a monumental task for data services, and indicates a continued increase in data consumption and subscriptions.

5G communication: A game changer
Data consumption has grown to become an intrinsic part of our daily lives. Therefore, the government's announcement to conduct spectrum auctions in 2022 to roll out 5G services by private telecom operators is a welcome step. Estimates suggest that 5G will represent around 29 percent of mobile subscriptions in India by the end of 2022, estimated at about 500 million subscriptions while at least 22 million skilled workers will be required to carry out 5G centre services by 2024. This implies that the roll out of 5G services will not only streamline data management but also create employment opportunities in the country.

The theory of everything
Improved connectivity with increased data consumption will enable enterprises to implement data management strategies effectively with emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and augmented and virtual reality, among others. The way these technologies are used will involve a massive transformation, and will extend beyond communication devices to processes, applications, and even people. The concept of the Internet of Things (IoT) will gradually transform into the Internet of Everything (IoE).

Enabling new-age technologies
The evolving communication landscape facilitates streamlining data management via hybrid cloud and network slicing that can economically benefit not just enterprises but also the country's military forces with real-time data flow, thanks to higher speeds and low latency. The advanced network capabilities will also promote the use of cloud computing and edge computing in domestic setups, thus increasing data consumption.

Improving network infrastructure
Advanced communication services involve a huge volume of sensitive data, creating a challenge for cybersecurity. Service providers will be required to make robust investments in network infrastructures. A simple solution is to be adopting holistic cybersecurity measures, such as cybersecurity mesh.

The government, on its part, took a great step towards improving network infrastructure with the introduction of 6Gc NextG platform, which will further fuel the growth of the telecom industry through wireless and resilient wireless and wireless broadband connectivity. This will in turn create more of digital business in the country, and significantly drive the country's economic growth and social development.

Improving telecom infrastructure
Under the National Broadband Mission, the DoT is reportedly targeting a combination of 100 percent broadband connectivity in the villages, 10 percent fibre-optic of mobile towers, average broadband speeds of 25 Mbps and 50 lakh km of optic fibre rollout by December 2022. This will boost the telecom infrastructure growth while generating jobs and indirect jobs. Implementation of the Right of Way (RoW) Rules 2016 across the country in one year will facilitate meeting the National Broadband Mission targets.

Design-led manufacturing in 5G
Consolidating R&D in India
The government's decision to allocate 6 percent of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to encourage design-led manufacturing under the FDI scheme is expected to attract 5G mobile services in the country. The scheme will encourage the private sector to significantly invest in designing 5G technologies, thus bringing in a greater focus on the R&D ecosystem in the country and promoting India as a cost-effective manufacturing hub globally.

To sum up, the year 2022 looks promising for the telecom sector and will give the much-needed impetus to structural and operational reforms through the new announcements made by the government. Several new trends will emerge, which will provide stability and sustainability not only in the telecom sector but to other crucial sectors as well, thus strengthening the economic growth of the country.

COAI on Expedite RoW Permissions

COAI advocated for expediting RoW permissions in different states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Manipur, Telangana

COAI issued a press release congratulating the government for the launch of 'Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal', a centralized Right of Way Portal by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India" a long-standing demand from the association




COAI lauds Karnataka govt's policy for 1-time fee for installing telecom towers

ANI | Updated: Jan 18, 2022 03:51 IST

Bengaluru (Karnataka) [India], January 18 (ANI): Cellular Operation Association of India (COAI), the representative body for the Indian telecommunications industry, lauded the notification of RoW Policy on Urban Municipal Corporation by the Government of Karnataka, said a press release.

These bye-laws are applicable to all City areas, Municipal Councils, Town Municipal Councils, Town Panchayats and areas under the Jurisdiction of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and includes Telecom Towers and OFC (Aerial and Underground).

'As per the policy, One-time fee to meet administrative expenses for the installation of Telecom Tower and Aerial OFC deployment is Rs 10,000 per Application (Tower & Aerial OFC), whereas for the deployment of Optical fibre it is Rs 1,000 per KM OFC (underground) and for the deployment of Cell on Wheel (CoW) (Micro Site/Small Cell, IBS) is Rs 2,000 per application,' said the release.



Fully support idea of deploying 5G 'small cells' on electric poles, says telecom industry body

The association noted that a key driver of effective 5G implementation is deployment of small cells which is a critical part of upgrading and expanding 4G networks.

Written By PTI
December 30, 2021 9:25:53 pm

Industry body COAI on Thursday said it fully supports the idea of deploying 5G 'small cells' on electric poles.


The association noted that a key driver of effective 5G implementation is deployment of small cells which is a critical part of upgrading and expanding 4G networks.



Legal backing for Right of Way by December: Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw


Minister Vaishnaw launched the GatiShakti Sanchar portal that will centralise and speed up approvals for laying of fibre and tower installations, as the country gears up for 5G roll-out.

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on May 14 said legal backing for Right of Way (RoW) will be in place by December and launched the GatiShakti Sanchar portal, that will centralise and speed up approvals for laying of fibre and tower installations, as the country gears up for 5G roll-out.




COAI applauds Telangana govt for launch of RoW Portal

COAI, the leading representative body for the Indian telecommunications industry, appreciates the Department of Information Technology Electronics and Communications Department, Telangana Secretariat for their initiative of launching the RoW Portal in the state of Telangana. This one-stop portal will significantly ease the process of getting 'Right of Way' permission from the respective District Collectors for the Telecommunication infrastructure provider companies. It will be a hassle-free solution which will hasten the approval process and bring transparency in the system encouraging more faith in the Government.



DoT Requests Maharashtra Telecom Infra Policy to be Aligned With Indian Telegraphy RoW Rules 2016

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), telecom industry with the support of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) have been working to support the Maharashtra government in facilitating the deployment of telecom infrastructure in the state. One of the biggest issues that the telecom service providers (TSPs) have raised is that the telecom infra policy of multiple states doesn't align with the Indian Telegraphy RoW Rules 2016. One such state where there is misalignment is Maharashtra.



Tamil Nadu becomes 26th state to align with Centre's telecom RoW rules

New Delhi, Jan 27 (PTI): Tamil Nadu has become the 26th state to issue Right of Way (RoW) rules for easing telecom infrastructure rollout in the state, in line with the guidelines issued by the Centre in November 2016, as per telecom industry bodies. Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala and the union territory of Daman and Diu are yet to align their rules with the guidelines issued by the Centre to facilitate expeditious rollout of telecom networks.

COAI on Supporting the continuity of telecom services

COAI advocated for the continuity of telecom services during the pandemic by issuing press releases for allowing the movement of telecom workers, speaking against network outages across Pune, urging for DoT's help with the Network Outrage Situation in Bihar and condemning the actions of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike in Bangalore against the removal of overhead optical fibre drive



BusinessLine
 COAI condemns removal of overhead optical fibre by Bengaluru civic officials



The cellular operators allege there was no prior intimation to remove the overhead optical fibre.

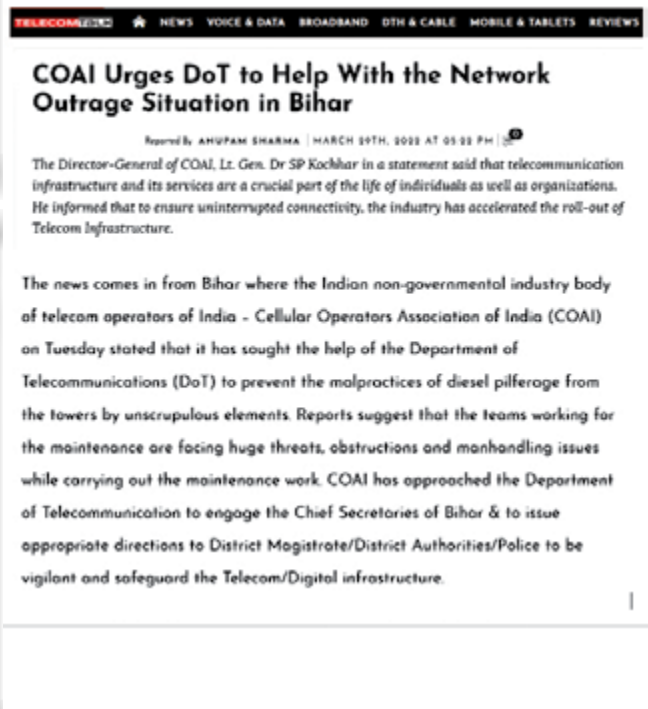
The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has protested what it says is the 'unannounced removal of overhead optical fibre cables by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or BBMP' leading to connectivity outage and inconvenience in the city.



TELECOMTALK
 COAI Pursues Maharashtra Government for Aid in Deployment of Aerial OFC Network in Pune

Reported By ANUPAM SHARMA | JANUARY 27TH, 2022 AT 07:57 PM

Telecom Service Providers have laid down aerial OFCs across the state of Maharashtra to fulfil the National Broadband Mission and for the realization of the 'Gati Shakti' mission by the Government of India. The aerial OFC's down by the operators are in compliance with all the requirements and conditions of the License issued by DoT as per the governing legal framework for the OFCs/ROWS.



TELECOMTALK NEWS VOICE & DATA BROADBAND DTH & CABLE MOBILE & TABLETS REVIEWS
 COAI Urges DoT to Help With the Network Outrage Situation in Bihar

Reported By ANUPAM SHARMA | MARCH 29TH, 2022 AT 05:22 PM

The Director-General of COAI, Lt. Gen. Dr SP Kochhar in a statement said that telecommunication infrastructure and its services are a crucial part of the life of individuals as well as organizations. He informed that to ensure uninterrupted connectivity, the industry has accelerated the roll-out of Telecom Infrastructure.

The news comes in from Bihar where the Indian non-governmental industry body of telecom operators of India - Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Tuesday stated that it has sought the help of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to prevent the malpractices of diesel pilferage from the towers by unscrupulous elements. Reports suggest that the teams working for the maintenance are facing huge threats, obstructions and manhandling issues while carrying out the maintenance work. COAI has approached the Department of Telecommunication to engage the Chief Secretaries of Bihar & to issue appropriate directions to District Magistrate/District Authorities/Police to be vigilant and safeguard the Telecom/Digital infrastructure.



PTI PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
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DoT urges state chief secretaries to facilitate easy movement of telecom staff for uninterrupted connectivity

The move comes amid stricter COVID-19 curbs across states as cases of the Omicron variant rise.

Written By [B] | January 6, 2022 9:34:01 pm

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has urged chief secretaries of states to facilitate easy movement of staff and field engineers of telecom companies to ensure uninterrupted connectivity and services.

The move comes amid stricter COVID-19 curbs across states as cases of the Omicron variant rise.

Industry Events:

6th Cyber & Data Security Summit 2022

Session on “How to Mitigate Fraud in a Digital World” #CDS2022. The annual summit is aimed to identify, manage, and mitigate the digital risks that stem from using connected devices and systems to run your business.



Voice & Data #TLFIndia Event

A virtual session - Voice and Data #TLFIndia event sharing keynote on Next-Generation Telecom – Scripting growth through Digital



Convergence India Expo 2022

29th Convergence India Expo session on 'Readiness vs Reality of 5G in India'

COAI @ConnectCOAI
"Govt is realizing that convergence is going to play a key role and 'Gati shakti' is a small example. As per the operators are concerned, let's do things in a cost-effective manner and grow by surviving on the #5Gcloud," said @DGCOAI during the panel at the 29th @Convergenc 2022.



COAI @ConnectCOAI
"As far as technology is concerned, up until #4Gnetwork, it was the network which was leading but in the era of #5G, the applications will be leading the telecommunications." - said @DGCOAI addressing the panel discussion 'Readiness Vs Reality of 5G in India' at 29th @Convergenc.



Small Cells

A guide for effective policymaking on small cell deployment at a virtual webinar organised by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) and GSMA.

COAI @ConnectCOAI
The scale at which the deployment of small cells is required can only be done through the sharing of fibre across sectors & by providing uninterrupted power to the sector: Manoj Kumar Singh, CRO, Indus Towers Limited during COAI's session on Small Cells



COAI @ConnectCOAI
RoW permissions play an important role in the deployment of Small Cells, laying fibre & even the deployment of microcells. This makes RoW policies an important issue- says @rpgandhi, president, Reliance Retail at COAI's webinar on "Small Cells: Key driver in effective 5G Rollout"





Voice & Data – TLF Dialogue 2021



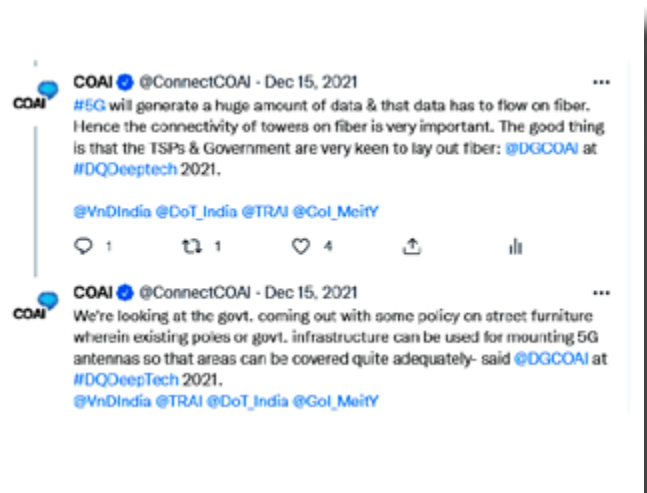
COAI @ConnectCOAI · Dec 21, 2021

I'm glad to say that the govt has taken measures to improve the policy part. We're awaiting better responses on the pricing part, which will enable the operators to roll out their networks: @DGCOAI at @VnDIndia TLF Dialogue on Strengthening Digital Infrastructure & Technologies.



DQ Deep tech 2021

An insightful panel discussion on 5G and the smart plane along with Chandrashekhar Ramamoorthy, Founder, Mozark and Shubhendu Parth



ET digital Telco

Panel discussion on “Enabling Policy Roadmap for the Sectoral health along with P Balaji, Rahul Vatts, Bharat B Bhatia, and Sonica Bajaj on the ET Telecom Digital Telco Virtual Summit 2021



5G ACIA Workshop

5G ACIA workshop on “Next Steps to Accelerated Digital-empowered Industrial Automation” in collaboration with COAI and 5G Forum India



5G India 2021



Israel Trade Mission in India



IMC Event – 5G opening doors to Digitalization and Network Agility



14 | MEDIA VISIBILITY SNAPSHOT 2021-22

Floor prices for data are critical: COAI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Industry association COAI on Tuesday contended that fixing floor prices was 'absolutely critical' and the need of the hour, given the 'major financial stress' in the telecom industry.

The association said floor prices needed to be fixed for data only for an interim period, say two years, and that voice calls could be excluded. "Telcos have incurred losses because of the downward pricing trend of data tariffs... revenue generation is now essential," S.P. Kochhar, director-general of Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI), said in a statement.

Trai's suggestion to waive RoW rates for 5 years to slash cost: COAI

Telecom regulator Trai's recommendation to waive right of way (RoW) charges for the next five years will significantly reduce the overall cost of network roll out for companies, industry body COAI said on Monday. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had on August 31 recommended to the government to coordinate with states to waive RoW charges for next five years (2022-23 to 2027-28) for expeditious laying of common ducts and posts. Operators and infrastructure providers need to take permission from various authorities for laying optical fibre, installing mobile towers, among others, for which the Centre has framed a right of way policy and notified it in 2016 after consultation with states and UTs. Trai also said the Centre should simultaneously ensure that during these five years, RoW charges for laying common ducts and posts shall be exempted for the central government departments and agencies as well. PTI

DoT AMENDS NORMS TO ALLOW TELCOS SHARE ACTIVE INFRA

Press Trust of India
feedback@livenint.com

NEW DELHI: Telecom operators will now be able to share active infrastructure, including core networks following amendment made by Department of Telecom in the licence norms.

The move is expected to reduce capital and operational expenditure of telecom operators like Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Department of Telecom (DoT) has also changed commercial VSAT licence rules to enable use of satellite connectivity to provide backend connectivity for mobile networks.

"The Licensee may share its own active and passive infrastructure for providing other services authorised to it under any other telecom licence issued by licensor," the new clause added in the licence norms said.

Earlier, only mobile towers and some active electronic components in the network were allowed to be shared among telecom service providers (TSPs).

Industry body COAI said there was a long pending demand by telcos to allow sharing of all active components in the network.

"At present, active infrastructure sharing was allowed to TSPs only for antenna, feeder cable, Node B and transmission systems.

"The allowing of sharing of core network elements such as MSC, HLR, IN etc. among TSPs will reduce the cost for TSPs and facilitate faster rollout of services. This is a very progressive step which will go a long way in enhancing digital connectivity in India," COAI Director General SP Kochhar said.



4-year moratorium on spectrum, AGR dues top telecom package

100% FDI via automatic route to also benefit beleaguered players

SURESHNA SINGH

New Delhi, September 15

The government has finally come in the rescue of the beleaguered telecom industry and announced a mega relief-cum-reform package. The Union Cabinet-cleared package includes a four-year moratorium on spectrum and Average Gross Revenue (AGR) dues, an ultra-liberalised investment regime that allows 100 per cent foreign direct investment (from 49 per cent now) through the automatic route, except from China and bordering countries.

The much-awaited package had been in the works for the past few months especially after Vodafone Idea (VIL) came to the brink of collapse as losses mounted and deficit piled up to around ₹1.4 lakh crore.

The government will have an option to convert any amount pertaining to the deferred payment due into equity at the end of the moratorium/deferral period.

The government has also done away with the Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC), a substantial levy on telecom service providers (TSPs), from future auctions and increased the tenure of spectrum of holdings from the existing 20 years to 30 years. This is valid

only for future spectrum auctions.

It has also changed the definition of AGR to exclude non-telecom revenues, which will help reduce the TSPs' payment burden. The government has ensured that the stressed TSPs have sufficient cash-in-hand and said that for auctions henceforth, no bank guarantees will be required in secure instalment payments.

Revenue neutral for govt Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that "The telecom relief package is revenue neutral for the government. These are expected to protect and generate employment opportunities, promote healthy competition, protect interests of consumers, bring liquidity, encourage investment and reduce the regulatory burden on TSPs."

Reacting to the Cabinet decision, Kumar Mangalam Birla, former Chairman of Vodafone Idea, said, "These reforms demonstrate the government's firm commitment to ensuring healthy growth of the industry."

New beginning: Voda CEO Nick Read, CEO, Vodafone Group, who had recently met the Telecom Minister, said the decision will mark the beginning of a "new era of India's di-

Relief and reforms

- Rationalisation of Adjusted Gross Revenue: Non-telecom revenue will be excluded on prospective basis from the definition of AGR.
- Huge reduction in Bank Guarantees (BG) requirements (80%) against licence fee and other similar levies. No requirements for multiple BGs in different Licensed Service Areas (LSA) regions in the country. Instead, one BG will be enough.
- From October 1, 2021, delayed payments of licence fee (LF) Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) will attract interest rate of SBI's MCLR plus 4% instead of MCLR plus 6%; interest compounded annually instead of monthly, penalty and interest on penalty removed.
- For auctions held henceforth, no BGs will be required to secure instalment payments.
- In future auctions, tenure of spectrum increased from 20 to 30 years.
- Surrender of spectrum will be permitted after 10 years for spectrum acquired in the future auctions.
- No Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for spectrum acquired in future spectrum auctions.
- Additional SUC of 0.3% for spectrum sharing removed.
- To encourage investment, SUCs will be permitted under automatic route in telecom sector. All safeguards will apply.



gital ambitions and for VIL's continued contribution to creating an inclusive and sustainable digital society to the benefit of all citizens."

Sunil Bhatti Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Airtel, said, "What lies ahead is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build the digital infrastructure that is a catalyst for the digital aspirations of over one billion Indians."

Mitesh Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Jio Infocomm, said that "These are timely steps towards strengthening

India's telecom sector... The government's telecom sector reforms will encourage us to bring newer and greater benefits to our customers..."

"These steps would go a long way in relieving the financial stress the sector is facing, boosting investments, encouraging healthy competition and in offering choice to customer. The announcement is aligned with the telecom industry's longstanding asks," Cellular Operators Association of India said.

Nokia India, Foxconn, 29 others get DoT nod for PLI

MISSA ANANDIA

New Delhi, 15 October

The Department of Telecom (DoT) on Thursday approved 31 proposals under the production-linked Incentive (PLI) scheme enabling an investment of ₹1,454 crore over the next four-and-a-half years.

Global players approved by the DoT are Foxconn, Nokia India, Hiking Star, Heterosys, Flex, Sabirna, and Comscape. Teles, Dicon Technologies, Nextync, Symra, Akashnatha Technologies, ITI, and HPSL Group are among the domestic companies that will now be eligible for the PLI scheme.

The industry has welcomed the move of the central government. "Telecom is the backbone of a digitally connected India, and this scheme is envisioned to provide a required boost to local R&D and enhance domestic production of around ₹1.42 trillion. This will also create employment opportunities and open up various avenues for the people of this country. India is already the second-largest telecom market globally and this will go a long way in making the country a global hub for telecom innovation," SP Kochhar, director general of Cellular Operators Association of India.

The DoT notified the PLI scheme for telecom and non-working products on February 24 with a financial outlay of ₹2,296 crore, over the five years.

The scheme for telecom gear manufacturing in India is expected to encourage the pro-

duction of equipment worth ₹2.64 trillion and create direct and indirect employment for about 40,000 people. The core aim of this scheme is to offset the import of telecom equipment worth more than ₹5,000 crore.

It can generate tax revenue of ₹1,000 crore from telecom equipment manufacturing, including core transmission equipment, 4G/5G Next Generation Radio Access Network and wireless equipment, access and Customer Premises Equipment, Internet of Things access devices, and other wireless equipment and enterprise equipment such as switches and routers.

The investors can earn an incentive for incremental sales up to 20 times the committed investment, enabling them to reach global scales and utilize their unused capacity and ramp up production.

शक्ति मिशन दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास को बढ़ावा देगा: सीओएआई

मास्कर न्यूज़ | वडींगढ़

सीओएआई ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को महत्वाकांक्षी परियोजना गति शक्ति का स्वागत किया है। ये योजना एक मल्टी-मॉडल कनेक्टिविटी प्लान है, जिसका उद्देश्य ढांचागत परियोजनाओं के कार्यान्वयन में तेजी लाना और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देना है। लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल डा. एसपी कोचर, महानिदेशक, सीओएआई, ने कहा, सीओएआई को इस बात की खुशी है कि सरकार 16 विभिन्न मंत्रालयों के डाटा का उपयोग करने जा रही है और इस पूरे डाटा को बीआइएसएजी-एन द्वारा तैयार किए गए डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म पर रखा जाएगा। गति शक्ति भारत के दूरसंचार बुनियादी ढांचे को एक बड़ा प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करेगा।

DoT Cuts Interest Rate on Delayed Fee Payments

To charge 2% interest above the one-year MCLR of SBI for delay in clearing licence fees, other statutory dues

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has amended licence conditions, reducing the interest rate for delayed payment of licence fee and scrapping elements such as penalty and interest on penalty. The move is part of the broader reforms announced earlier this month in a bid to ease the financial burden on the telecom sector and retain the market structure, which currently consists of three private and one public telco, as well as to promote ease of doing business.

According to the statement issued by the DoT, the telecom department will now charge 2% interest above the one-year marginal cost of lending rate (MCLR) of State Bank of India for delays in payment of licence fees or any other statutory dues, and the interest

Relief for Telcos

DoT cuts interest rate for delayed payment of licence fee, scraps penalty and interest on penalty

Out of the ₹1.47 lakh cr AGR dues imposed on telecom industry, as much as 74% amounted to interest and penalties

Industry body COAI welcomes rationalisation of interest rates, penalty waiver

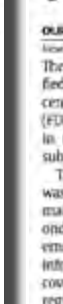
will be compounded annually.

Earlier, telecom firms were required to pay 4% interest above the one-year MCLR of SBI. Also the interest component which was charged on a monthly basis will now be charged annually.

The amendments have come into effect from October 1.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) grouping said the move will ease financial stress on the sector and promote ease of doing business.

Still to Notify all Reform Measures >>> 6



Centre allows 100% FDI in telecom via automatic route

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, October 15

The government on Tuesday notified its decision to permit 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) under the automatic route in the telecom services sector subject to certain conditions.

Till now, only 49 per cent of FDI was allowed through the automatic route and anything beyond that had to come via the government route. Firms, including infrastructure providers, will be covered under the new FDI regime.

Reforms package

The 100 per cent FDI was part of the telecom reforms package approved by the Cabinet on September 15. Other reliefs included a four-year moratorium on AGR (Average Gross Revenue) dues, and an option for the government to convert dues into equity post the moratorium period.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), in a statement, said foreign investment in telecom



services will be subject to the condition of Press Note 1 of 2020. According to Press Note 3, an entity of a country which shares a land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the government route.

The notification read: "All telecom services, including telecom infrastructure providers (Caterpillar), viz. Basic, Cellular, Unified Access Services, Unified License (Access services), Unified License, National/International Long Distance, Commercial VSat, Public Mobile Radio Trunked Services (PMRTS), Global Mobile Personal Communications Services (GMPCS), all types of ISP li-

ceses... and such other services as may be permitted by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)."

Ending uncertainties

The licensing, security and any other terms and conditions, as specified by DoT from time to time, will be observed by licensees/entities providing services above, as well as investors, it said. Accordingly, cases requiring government approval under Press Note 3 provisions will continue to be in place, it added.

According to analysts, going forward, the steps taken will clearly take away some of the uncertainties in the sector and, overall, it should lead to a more stabilised regime and help to attract more investments, now that 100 per cent FDI through the automatic route is approved.

"The FDI approval will help industry build a robust telecom sector for new India," said SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India.

Business Standard

DoT allows telecom operators to digitise customer application forms

Telecom operators have been allowed to digitise customer application forms, a move that is expected to ease updation of subscribers' data

Telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Director General SP Kochhar said the nation is moving forward into a digital era, and these guidelines form part of a landmark decision that will assist telecom operators in maintaining and streamlining processes.

"It will result in the creation of an electronic database that will enable the ease of doing business, aid faster delivery of services and also eco-friendly initiative to have Digital CAFs," Kochhar said.

● **INDUSTRY REACTION**

COAI: Spectrum reforms to ease financial burden on telcos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, October 12

INDUSTRY BODY COAI on Tuesday said spectrum reforms notified by the government, including removal of financial bank guarantee requirements, and scrapping of spectrum usage charge (SUC) for future auctions are "welcome steps" that would ease financial burden on operators.

The slew of measures would go a long way in enhancing the ease of doing business in the telecom sector, the Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) said in a statement.

COAI director-general SP Kochhar described them as "very welcome steps which will reduce the financial burden on TSPs (telecom service providers) and will go a long way in enhancing the ease of doing business in the telecom sector."

The comments came as the government notified that for future spectrum auctions, the need for submission of financial bank guarantee (FBG) to secure annual spec-



DoT scraps FBG requirement

THE GOVERNMENT ON Tuesday notified that for future spectrum auctions, the need for submission of financial bank guarantee (FBG) to secure annual spectrum instalment has been done away with.

Scrapping out other modalities around spectrum allocation, the telecom department also said it would appropriately address the eligibility conditions for participation in the auction so that participants have sufficient financial capacity. — PTI

com industry, that offered much needed brotherly to players in the sector.

"We appreciate the steps taken by the government with regard to the future spectrum assignments to the TSPs," COAI said.

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Business News | Industry | Telecom | Telecom News | COAI lauds Budget's focus on digital connectivity, disappointed on demands being unmet

COAI lauds Budget's focus on digital connectivity; disappointed on demands being unmet



Telecom industry body COAI on Tuesday lauded the Budget's focus on digital connectivity and announcement related to spectrum auction for 5G rollout but expressed disappointment that its long-standing demands remained unaddressed. Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) said it looks forward to continued and

constructive engagement with the government for lowering of levies on the telecom sector.

TN notifies rules for easing Telecom Infrastructure

New Delhi, Jan 28:

Tamil Nadu has become the 29th state to issue Right of Way (RoW) rules for easing telecom infrastructure rollout in the state, in line with the guidelines issued by the Centre in November 2016, as per telecom industry bodies.

Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala and the union territory of Daman and Diu are yet to align their rules with the guidelines issued by the Centre to facilitate expeditious rollout of telecom networks.

Telecom industry body COAI on Thursday appreciated the notification of the Tamil Nadu Telecom Infrastructure Policy 2021 and said the bye-laws are applicable to all city areas, municipal councils, town municipal committees, town panchayats, etc and include telecom towers and OTC (aerial and underground).

"We thank the State Government of Tamil Nadu for notification of Tamil Nadu Telecom Infrastructure Policy, 2021 for the installation of mobile towers and deployment of OTC across the state. This will facilitate the speedy rollout of telecom infrastructure," COAI Director General S P Kochhar said in a statement.

As per the policy, the state government has fixed a one-time fee of Rs 10,000 per applica-

tion to meet administrative expenses for the installation of telecom tower deployment.

Telecom companies will be charged Rs 1,000 per kilometre for rolling out optical fibre cable (OFC), be it underground or over-ground.

Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) Director General TR Das said, "... With the continuous support of DoT, today Tamil Nadu has adopted the RoW policy, Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala and Daman and Diu are the remaining ones which are yet to adopt the

RoW November 2016 policy" The policy encourages the deployment of towers, OTC, cell on wheel, micro sites, small cell, in-building solution etc that are essential to improve the digital connectivity across urban

municipal corporations and other areas of Tamil Nadu.

The policy also supports the regularisation of the existing telecom infrastructure that will contribute towards the growth of the state.

5G & aviation can co-exist: COAI

AMEESH PHADNIS
Mumbai, 12 January

Commercial 5G service and aviation can safely co-exist, Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) said, allaying concerns about 5G signal interference with aircraft systems.

COAI, which represents telecom companies, issued a statement on Wednesday in reaction to a letter by Federation of Indian Pilots

that raised the issue about possible interference of 5G signals with radio altimeter in an aircraft. Altimeters measure altitude above terrain, helps pilots in situational awareness during low visibility and also provides inputs for onboard systems such as the traffic collision avoidance system.

"We understand the concerns raised by Federation of Indian Pilots, and the matter has been highlighted in the past as well wherein the

authorities have found the issue of spectrum interference uncorroborated. There is a gap of 530 MHz (from 3670 MHz to 4200 MHz) in the transmission of frequencies, thus, making it safe for 5G and aviation to co-exist," COAI director general S P Kochhar said.

Radio altimeters operate within 4.2 to 4.4 GHz (4200-4400 MHz). Aviation bodies in the US have been expressing fears that telecom services using spectrum in 3.7-3.98

GHz could cause interference to altimeters.

In India, while 5G trials are underway in the 700 MHz, 3.5 GHz, and 26 GHz bands, the Department of Telecommunications has decided to allocate new frequency bands in the 526-698 MHz band for 5G services as well. The government expects commercial rollout of services later this year and spectrum auctions are expected in July.

Cellular operators laud telecom infra by-laws

PTI & IANS

THE Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) and other telecom operators and associations lauded the Karnataka Telecommunication Infrastructure and Underground Optical Fibre Cable Bye-Laws 2021, issued by the state government.

The notification, issued on January 12, 2022 and made public on January 17, 2022, allows a one-time fee of Rs 10,000 to meet administrative expenses for the installation of Telecom Tower and Aerial Optical Fibre (TOAF) deployment per application (tower and aerial OFC). For optical fibre, it is Rs 1,000 per km OFC (underground) and for CoI on Wood, Rs 2,000 per application. The associations said this policy will help meet the National Broadband Mission, increase the broadband penetration, provide internet and broadband services to the

citizens and improve the connectivity and capacity.

"The telecom industry has emerged as a service economy during the pandemic. With telecom reforms, this announcement will become the base for digital connectivity in the state and will go a long way in building a robust infrastructure. Today, as the country prepares for 5G, it is important to understand that the roadmap for Digital India is seamless connectivity," said Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI.

He said they have also urged the State Government to expedite implementation of the policy at all levels which will boost the direct and indirect jobs associated with the roll-out of telecom infrastructure in Karnataka. As per data shared by the association, Karnataka requires 90,000 telecom towers as against the present 4,000 towers.



High 5G spectrum prices may push players up against wall: COAI DG

Telecom industry body COAI has asserted that spectrum pricing should be kept conducive to market conditions as 5G entails upfront capital investments with monetisation spread over a long-haul, and pricing radiowaves high will only push the players up against the wall. The stage is set for Telecom Regulatory Authority of India to come out with its recommendations on 5G spectrum pricing and other modalities for upcoming auctions. **PTI**

COAI, GSMA in pact to advance mobile telecom

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, March 2

Industry bodies COAI and GSMA, on Wednesday, announced signing a pact to advance mobile telecommunications in India and collaborate in "areas of mutual interest".

The memorandum of understanding was signed in Barcelona by COAI Director-General SP Kochhar and GSMA Head (Asia-Pacific) Julian Gorman.

In a joint statement issued here, the two bodies said they have "come together once again to work and collaborate in areas of mutual interest. COAI and GSMA have signed a memorandum of understanding to advance mobile telecommunications in India".

Telcos Seek Refund of ₹35K Cr Input Tax Credit

New Delhi: Telecom operators want the government to refund input tax credit (ITC) of around ₹35,000 crore, reduce levies and waive GST on licence fees and spectrum usage in the budget. According to pre-budget recommendations of telecom industry body



COAI, whose members include Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, the telecom sector wants the government to suspend univer-

sual service obligation fund (USOF), which financially supports rollout of telecom services in the rural area, to reduce burden on the service providers. "Refund unutilised ITC of ₹35,000 crore of the industry, which cannot be utilized in the near future. The current market dynamics have led to the accumulation of massive ITC. **PTI**

COAI to begin pilot deployment of 5G small cells

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
@ New Delhi

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Thursday urged Cellular Operators Association of India to carry out a pilot project for the deployment of small cells in the country to check call drop or network congestion issue after

rolling out 5G network. While addressing COAI, Chairman of TRAI PD Vaghela asked COAI to form a team from its members and carry out four pilot projects one each covering a port, airport, metro line and a congested city area.

A small cell is an umbrella term used to describe a miniature radio access point (AP)

or wireless network base station that enhances cellular network coverage and capacity in areas. In a simple term, a small cell is a 5G tower, and has the same characteristics of the classic base stations.

On its part, COAI on Thursday informed that it, along with GSMA, had conducted a survey of stakeholder compa-

nies in India to examine the challenges to improve small deployment in the country. After the survey, it had made 14 suggestions ranging from simplifying procedures for small deployment to granting easy access to street furniture, to updating and ensuring uniform implementation of the 2016 Right of Way Rules.

State Chief Secys told to Exempt ePass for Access to Telecom Sites

Mentazir Abbas & Ashutosh Kumar

New Delhi: The Department of Telecommunications Thursday sent an advisory to chief secretaries of all states, to allow unrestricted access to telecom sites without mandatory e-pass following lockdowns in the wake of Covid-19 and variant of omicron (VOC) Omicron. In a letter dated January 6, 2022 sent to chief secretaries of multiple state governments, DoT secretary K Rajaraman said, "the staff/personnel/field engineers of TSPs, ISPs, IEs, and their partners (ODMs) and optical fibre maintenance entities may be exempted from the e-pass process and movement is allowed on production of valid company ID card under essential service category." "Telecommunications, according to Rajaraman, being essential services require all support so that telecom and broadband internet services can be provided without interruption, and telecom infrastructure are maintained, enabling all of us to remain connected during any lockdowns. The letter from top official comes close on the heels of industry groups Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) seeking "urgent intervention" from the telecom department to ensure round the clock voice and data connectivity amidst the looming third wave of Covid-19. Delhi-based infrastructure providers (IP) body, DIPA, urged DoT to direct all chief secretaries



to allow telecom technicians and field staff to access telecom tower sites for operations and maintenance work, attending to faults, diesel filling/refueling, amongst others. Rajaraman further told chief secretaries that millions of citizens are engaged in work from home, and a large number of traders run businesses via e-commerce platforms needing digital connectivity. "We think the telecom department for taking prompt action and issuing advisory to state officials," Thakur Raj Dua, director general of DIPA told ET Telecom. Earlier in the day, DIPA said that telecom services are pivotal for establishment of essential services and applications, apart from helping the basic function of enabling communication, and under this situation, it becomes almost important to ensure the continuity of telecom operations.

'Don't delay right of way nod for broadband'

Staff Writer
feedback@liveemint.com
NEW DELHI

Field units should ensure that there is no delay in granting of right of way (RoW) permissions to telecom service providers to speed up the roll-out of broadband across the country, said telecom secretary K. Rajaraman.

Field units should conduct monthly meetings with service providers to review the application approval process and pendency, to expedite approvals for quick roll-out of broadband across country, Rajaraman said at a meeting with state information technology secretaries and department of technology officers from the head office and field units on Thursday.

"There should be no delay in grant of RoW permissions as it can become a major impediment in growth of communication services," he said,



States have been asked to expedite RoW requests.

according to the ministry of communications. "There is a direct correlation between low broadband penetration and non-alignment of RoW rules in the same state/licence service area. The problem could be exacerbated in light of the planned 5G roll-out," he said.

The telecom department has also decided to review the status of grant of such approvals at regular intervals along

with industry associations such as the Cellular Operators Association of India and the Digital Infrastructure Providers Association. It has also appealed to state governments to expedite RoW application approval process in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016.

"This will be helpful to expedite the RoW permissions to the telecom industry and hence the realization of targets set under the National Broadband Mission.

This is a positive move towards making India digitally more advanced," said S.P. Kochhar, director general of COAI.

Secretaries and heads of department of state governments were also requested to facilitate speedy disposal of RoW applications. State

broadband committees were also requested to ensure alignment of the state policy with central rules issued in 2016.

"For quick roll-out of broadband across the country, it is necessary that the telecom and infrastructure companies are able to lay optical fibre cables and install new towers, which is possible only if state governments and local bodies provide necessary RoW approvals promptly," the secretary said.

The telecom department has taken various initiatives for ease of doing business and to increase the penetration of broadband internet, including the adoption of initiatives such as the National Digital Communication Policy (NDCP) and implementation of the National Broadband Mission.

Field units should conduct regular meetings to review the application approval process, Rajaraman said

HIGH SPECTRUM RESERVE PRICE IRKS COMPANIES

Telcos may give 700 MHz band a miss, again

KIRAN RATHEE
New Delhi, April 12

TELECOM OPERATORS ARE likely to once again give a miss to the premium 700 MHz band spectrum, citing the high price. The band has remained unsold in the previous two auctions — 2016 and 2021. Industry executives told ET that the absence of the 700 MHz band in their portfolio would mean that stand-alone networks offering both voice and data services would get impacted, leading to patchy 5G services in the first few years.

The operators do not seem keen on the band despite the price reduction of 40% to ₹3,927 crore per MHz compared to the 2021 auctions, as



for a 30-year lease, it works out to be nearly the same. For buying 5 MHz on a pan-India level, telcos would have to shell out ₹20,000 crore for a 20-year period. Since the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai)

has said that if spectrum is leased for a 30-year period, the price would be 1.5 times of the 20-year span, operators would have to spend ₹30,000 crore. This is hardly a reduction from the March 2021 auctions when

Operators did not touch it as they would have had to spend **₹32,840 crore** for a 20-year lease period

Now, Trai has given a price of **₹3,927 crore** per MHz, which is 40% lower

Still for a 30-year lease, operators will have to pay around **₹30,000 crore** for 700 MHz band

band of 3,300-3,670 MHz by 36% to ₹317 crore per MHz and fixing the price of the 24.25-28.5 GHz spectrum band at ₹6.99 crore per MHz, operators would need to fork out ₹55,938 crore to buy a combination of these two for the pan-India level. If they spend another ₹30,000 crore on 700 MHz, their total spend would go up to ₹85,938 crore, which would be prohibitively high.

Operators FE spoke to said that since spectrum in the 3,300-3,670 MHz and 24.25-28.5 MHz are for data purposes — the core of 5G —, it makes sense for them to first buy these bands.

Continued on Page 10

5G spectrum price cuts not enough: Telcos slam Trai

NEW DELHI

12 telecom operators have slammed Thursday's price cuts for the 3,300-3,670 MHz 5G band recommended by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), which has slashed it by 36 per cent from ₹4,927 crore per MHz to ₹3,217 crore per MHz, if not sufficient to attract bidders.

A top executive of a leading telecom operator said, "We believe that the price cuts should be one-third of the price for 30-year lease to build a viable 5G business. What the regulator has done is reduce it by one-third, which does not make for a viable business. The regulator has gone only half the way. The price has to be done by the government."

The price of spectrum is being followed for 3G services, for which the price has been slashed from ₹150 crore per MHz to ₹45 crore per MHz since 2010. The price of 4G services has also been slashed from ₹1,500 crore per MHz to ₹450 crore per MHz since 2010.

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Nov 11, 2021

The @DoT_India has simplified the KYC process, making it contactless and customer-friendly.
#Cybercrime #KYCFraud #OnlineFraud #KYCScam

@TRA | @GoLMeitY | @airtelnews | @riliancojio | @vodafone_NEWS

KYC

Aadhaar based e-KYC
Telecom operators receive customer's details online from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

New telecom reforms that have simplified KYC process

Source: Telecom User Forum the Economic Times
Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Nov 5, 2021

Always be cautious even though the KYC process is digital; no legitimate financial institution sends messages asking to call regarding an expiring SIM card.
#Cybercrime #KYCFraud #OnlineFraud #KYCScam

BE AWARE OF THE fraudulent KYC SMS and Links

Dear customer your SIM Document has expired Today. Please call us immediately. Your SIM will be blocked within 24 hours.

Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Nov 27, 2021

#5G technology will be a serious game-changer for enterprises. It would offer significant improvements in network performance over the previous generations enabling us to achieve the digital empowerment goal.
#Network #Technology #Internet

5G

5G will bring a huge boost for enterprises through low latency & real-time data transmission

Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Mar 8

Ms. Sheena Joseph shares her experience working in the #telecom industry over the years and how the industry has helped her #BreakTheBias in various aspects. Sharing the stories of #WomenInTelecom.
#InternationalWomensDay2022 #IWD2022 @MinistryWCD

Ms. Sheena Joseph
VP - Customer Service for Enterprise Business, Vodafone Idea

Prior to joining Vodafone Idea Limited, she was associated with Tata Tote Business Services (TTBS) as National Head of Service Assurance for Enterprise Business. With over 20 years of experience, she has been in the telecommunications industry for quite some time. She possesses expertise in Strategy and Operations. She brings in a lot of skills on the table, from Customer Experience, Consumer Research & Analytics, Communication, Content Management, Field operations, Relationship management etc. She believes in keeping up with the trends.

#WomenInTelecom

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Nov 25, 2021

Beware of the growing number of unauthorized e-wallet mobile applications or links which promise quick and hassle-free payment options. Engaging with these can give a fraudster access to all the data on your smartphone.
Stay Informed, Stay Alert
#CyberCrime #KYCFraud

Stay secure from KYC fraud

Be careful while installing any E-wallet applications

Limit the permissions (permissions in the terms provided by the application)

Install antivirus and update operating system regularly

Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Nov 30, 2021

#Illegalboosters interfere with your #Network and affect others' connections as well. Possession, selling and installation of the same is a punishable offense. If you know someone who is using it, immediately inform your service provider about the same.
#SayNoToIllegalBoosters

Hi Hihihi, I am planning to get a signal booster installed at my house. Is it ok?

No, its possession, installation & use is illegal under the IT Act 2008

Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Mar 7

Not just in Gotham but in India too, stealing #networks by installing #mobile signal boosters is a punishable offense. #YouCanBeCaught by @TheBatman

www.coai.com | @ConnectCOAI | Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Mar 27

BEWARE of fake calls that lure you into downloading third-party apps to confirm or update your KYC by asking for your important information like CVV or OTP. #KYCFrauds #FraudAlert

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COAI @ConnectCOAI · Mar 29

Fraudsters pose as bank executives to get your confidential information such as CVV, OTP, and PIN. Never share this information with anybody over call who claims to be a representative from Bank, Credit Card Company, etc. Educate yourself and your friends to be safe. #FraudAlert

www.coai.com | @ConnectCOAI | Cellular Operators Association of India

COAI @ConnectCOAI · Jan 12

From ensuring open, safe & trusted internet to protecting online #privacy, IT rules 2021 intend to create a robust & risk-free IT ecosystem for the end-users & intermediaries. Here's sharing a few Insights about the importance of IT rules 2021. #Internet #Telecommunications #COAI

IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN IT RULES, 2021

- Ensure open, safe & trusted internet with accountability of intermediaries to users
- Protect online privacy
- Provide framework for grievance redressal mechanism
- Prescribe due diligence to be followed by social media intermediaries

www.coai.com | @ConnectCOAI | Cellular Operators Association of India



15 ABOUT COAI



COAI was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society. The Association is dedicated to the advancement of modern communication through the establishment of world-class mobile infrastructure, products and services and to delivering the benefits of innovative and affordable mobile communication services to the people of India.

<h3>INDUSTRY POLICY</h3>	<h3>TELECOM ISSUES</h3>	<h3>NEW TECHNOLOGIES</h3>	<h3>THOUGHT LEADERSHIP</h3>
<p>COAI has emerged as the official voice of the Indian telecom industry that interacts directly with ministries, policy makers, regulators, financial institutions and technical bodies. It provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas between these bodies and the service providers, who share a common interest in the development of mobile telephony in the country.</p>	<p>COAI collaborates with other industry associations such as CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, GSMA, ISPAI, ICA, etc., with the objective of presenting an industry consensus to the Government on crucial issues related to the growth and development of the Indian telecom industry.</p>	<p>COAI is determined to encourage the confluence of technologies to facilitate the move towards complete convergence in communications as this could greatly help India mitigate the problems of low fixed line penetration and help realize country's vision of becoming an Information Society.</p>	<p>COAI aims to dispense information and spread awareness among the national and international entities and consumers on issues pertaining to service quality and other value-added services provided by the operators to their subscribers.</p>

16 COAI SECRETARIAT



LT. GEN. DR. SP KOCHHAR
Director General

MR. VIKRAM TIWATHIA
Deputy Director General

MR. SAURABH PURI
Associate Director General -
Research & Analysis

MR. KSTEM KAPOOR
Deputy Director
(Regulatory and Telecom Infrastructure)

MS. NEETI TIWARI
Senior Manager - TIC

MS. ANANDHI NAIR
Deputy Manager –
DG Office

MR. DEEPAK KUMAR GUPTA
Deputy Manager - TIC

MR. VIKAS
Manager, Regulatory

MR. ABHISHEK JHA
Deputy Manager - Legal

MR. GAURAV MATHUR
Deputy Account Manager

MR. GOPAL MITTAL
Associate Director General -
Commercial & Finance

MS. VERTIKA MISRA
Associate Director General –
Technology & Security

MR. SUNDER SINGH PORIYA
Senior Manager - Administration

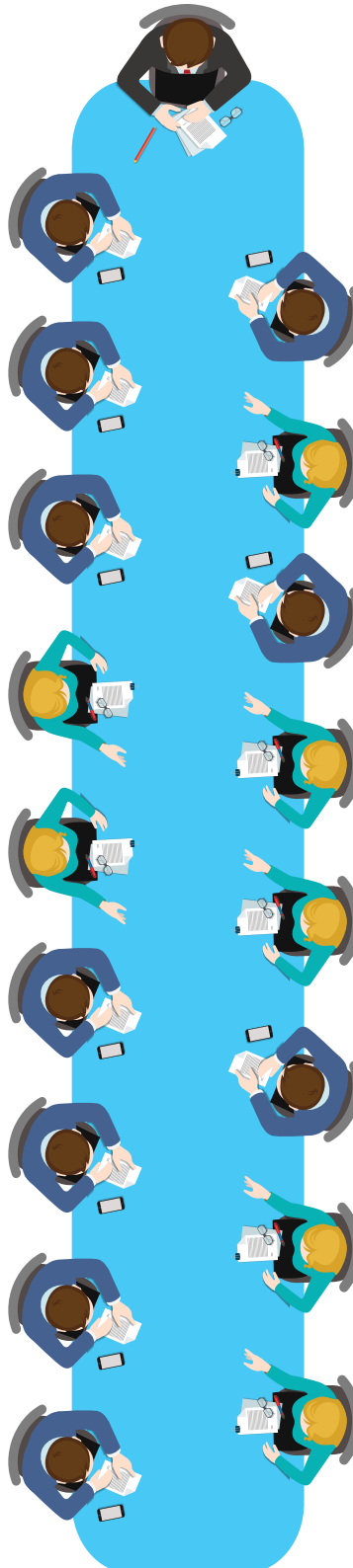
MS. NISHI SINGH
Deputy Manager –
Corporate Communications

MS. SANKI LALWANI
Manager - Technology & Security

MR. VIKRANT RAI
Manager – Associate Members

MS. MANISHA CHAWLA
Manager – Corporate Communications

MS. NEETU SHARMA
Assistant Manger- Regulatory
(Strategy & Policy)



17 | MANAGEMENT



The COAI secretariat comprises of a Director General at the helm of Deputy Director General to support him. There are five departments of teams in the association that ensure that COAI is one of the most credible and reputed industry bodies, solely dedicated towards advancement of mobile communication.

There are currently 20 people working in the COAI secretariat bringing talent and skills from various areas of work, such as regulatory, legal, finance, technology and infrastructure.



AJAI PURI

Chairman

Mr. Ajai Puri is the Chief Operating Officer (India and South Asia) at Bharti Airtel Limited. He has been with Bharti Airtel since 2004 and has held several senior leadership positions including Director – Market Operations, Director and CEO – DTH, and CEO – Kolkata & West Bengal, Odisha. Prior to joining Bharti Airtel, Mr. Puri served as the Business Head - Foods at Cargill Foods India. He began his career with VST India Ltd, an associate company of British American Tobacco (UK).



PRAMOD K MITTAL

Vice Chairman

Mr. Pramod Kumar Mittal comes with a rich experience of 42 years in telecommunications. Before joining India's largest telecom operator, Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. as President, Mr. Mittal served in the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, for over 37 years. Since the year 2000, he served as Deputy Director General (DDG) and then as Senior DDG, working in the telecommunication policy formulation and implementation, licensing and regulatory wings of the DoT. During his tenure, he was responsible for the liberalization of Basic services, opening of National Long-Distance Services and International Long-Distance Services, introduction and implementation of Unified Access Service Licence and the Unified Licence regime.



**LT. GEN. DR. SP
KOCHHAR**

Director General

Lt. Gen Dr. SP Kochhar, a decorated military veteran, retired as Signal Officer in Chief, the head of the ICT wing of the Indian Army, where he was responsible for planning, executing and operating all Telecom and IT networks of the Army. Experienced business leader, prolific speaker and a decorated military veteran with a forward-thinking vision. New technology and change-management evangelist with a passion for developing organizations for sustainable growth.

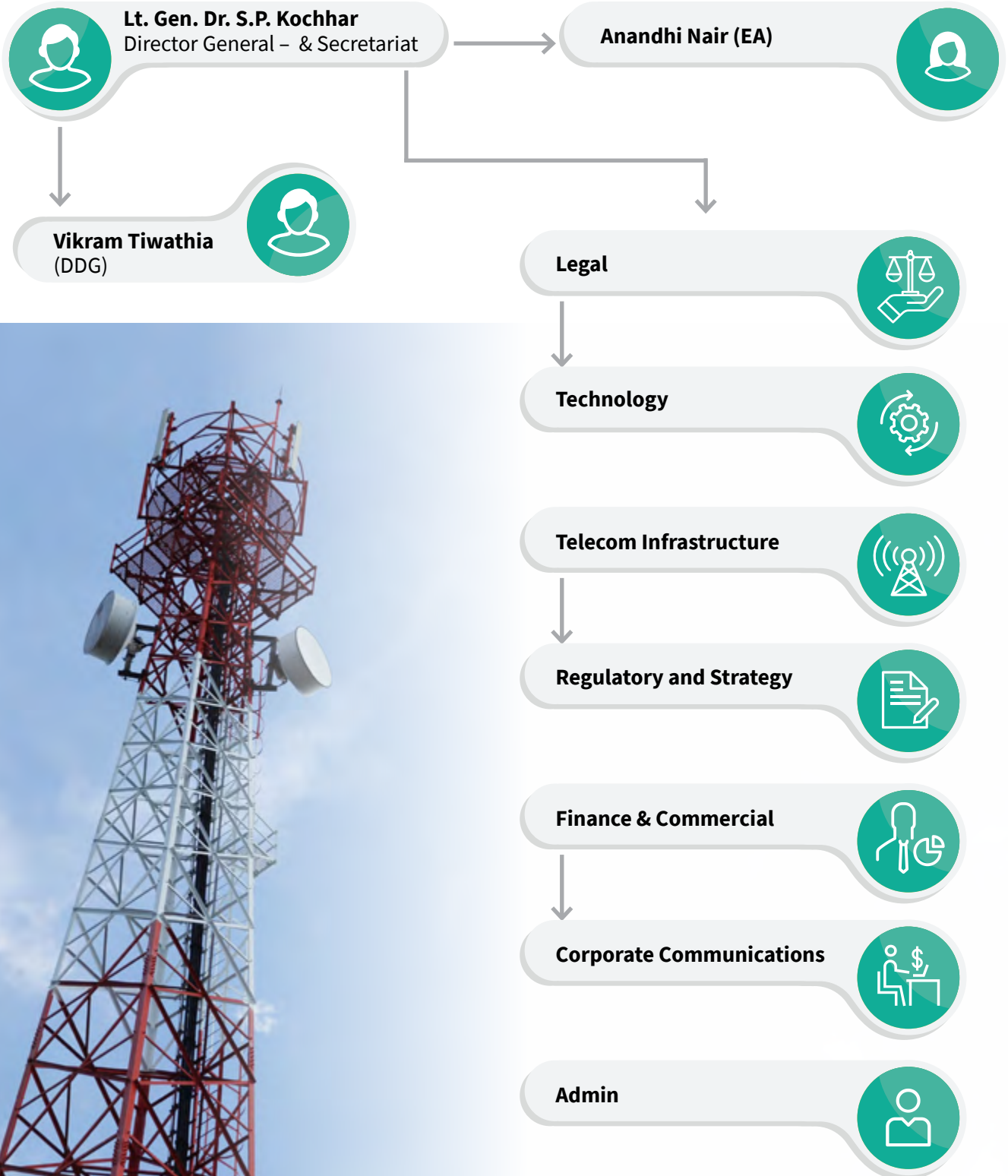
PhD in Leadership Management; Author of the book 'Trained Soldier to a Skilled Citizen'.

Board and Governing Council Memberships- was a Director on the Board of BEL, ECIL, ITI, ARTHF, ASADEL.

18 COAI STRUCTURE 2020-21



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



19 COAI MEMBERS



COAI Core Members



COAI Associate Members



20 COAI TEAM



The COAI team includes dynamic, experienced and highly skilled professionals with a must-do attitude and remarkable proficiency in their respective verticals. Lean and yet highly competent, the Secretariat is committed towards the successful implementation of every activity undertaken towards the cause of the industry.

Regular coordination with the Government, the Regulator, relevant State Government departments, and other stakeholders, have established appreciation and recognition of the Secretariat's efficiency and professional prowess, both within, and outside the industry.

This year Mr. Manish Gupta as Senior Executive Legal, Mr. Ashish Mathur- Senior Manager and Mr. Dharmesh Tak - Asst Manager joined COAI adding to the Secretariat's strength.

The Secretariat is thankful to all its members and highly appreciates their valuable guidance, mentoring and constant support towards its efficient functioning and productivity.





14, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi-110001

14, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, New Delhi-110001

+91 11 2334 9275

+91 11 2334 9276/77

contact@coai.in

www.coai.com

