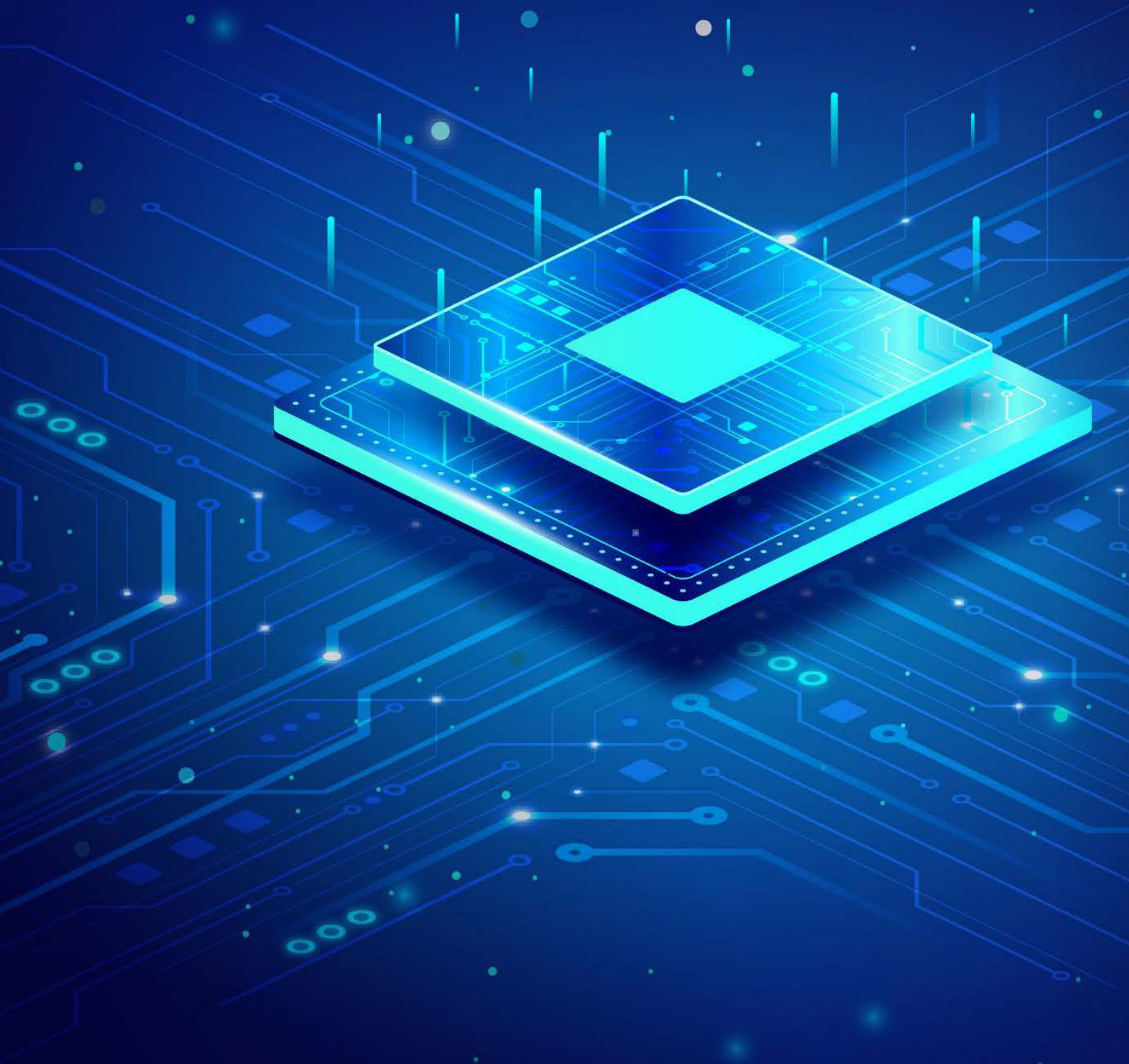




ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

COAI



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अनिल कुमार लाहोटी
Anil Kumar Lahoti



सत्यमेव जयते

अध्यक्ष
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Chairman

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Message



The Indian telecom sector is at the centre stage of driving innovation, connectivity, and digital empowerment for millions of citizens across the nation. As the Chairman of TRAI, I am excited about the tremendous opportunities that lie ahead, and the pivotal role TRAI plays in shaping the trajectory of India's telecom landscape.

The year 2023 witnessed significant milestones for Telecom as the 5G network rollout gained momentum, marking a substantial leap for India. Furthermore, the country made noteworthy progress in establishing an enhanced digital ecosystem, along with clear intension to play a pivotal role in developing global standards for the upcoming 6G technology. India's digital transformation through telecommunication has been a dynamic process, fueled by various factors such as the implementation of India Stack, widespread 4G network deployment, digital infrastructure, holistic approach to development of digital payment ecosystem, and Government initiatives like "Digital India" and "Make in India". The integration of emerging technologies like AI, IoT and Edge is shaping smart cities, efficient healthcare systems, and advanced industrial processes.

TRAI has been actively engaged in addressing regulatory challenges, collaborating with stakeholders, and conducting in-depth consultations on critical issues within the telecom sector. Notable recent efforts include recommendations on introduction of digital connectivity infrastructure provider (DCIP) authorization under Unified License (UL), rationalization of Entry Fee and Bank Guarantees, Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India, promoting telecom equipment manufacturing, introduction of Calling Name Presentation (CNAP) service, leveraging AI and Big Data in Telecommunication sector, Rating of Building or Areas for Digital Connectivity, amongst others.

COAI's role in facilitating cooperation and steering the industry forward is vital for the nation's connectivity, technological advancement, and economic progress. I congratulate COAI and its members for the commendable efforts made by them and wish COAI all success for the AGM.

(Anil Kumar Lahoti)

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

डॉ. नीरज मिश्र, भा.प्र.से.
सचिव
DR. NEERAJ MITTAL, IAS
Secretary



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

Message

At the outset, I congratulate COAI for their commendable efforts in steering the Indian telecom industry. COAI's commitment to fostering collaboration, advocating for policies that propel growth and championing innovation, have significantly contributed to the dynamic evolution of India's telecom landscape.

The Indian telecom industry has demonstrated admirable growth over the past few months. India now proudly holds the rank of the world's second largest market in terms of subscriber numbers. Besides the remarkable growth, the nation's progressive and investor-friendly policies have also positioned it as a global telecom manufacturing and supply hub.

The deployment of 5G, emergence of 6G, regulatory advancements and the evolving technological landscape, collectively shape a dynamic and resilient telecom ecosystem. In 2023, India celebrated the rapid nationwide rollout of 5G, achieving the status as the second largest 5G network, as well as the fastest 5G rollout globally in a span of just one year. With over 4.19 lakh 5G BTS sites across more than 717 districts, this accomplishment exemplifies a collaborative effort between the government and industry players, aligned with the vision of 'Digital India.' The "Bharat 6G Vision" document aims for India to become a leading contributor to 6G technology by 2030. The vision prioritizes affordability, sustainability and ubiquity in the deployment of 6G, aligning with global standards set by the ITU 6G Framework.

Looking ahead, the DoT has set ambitious targets for 2047, aligning with the government's vision to become a developed nation. Policies are being formulated to develop a largely indigenous domestic telecom network in India, aiming to capture a significant share of global manufacturing of mobile technologies and increasing India's share in the global supply of optical and network equipment. Ongoing initiatives, such as production-linked incentives (PLI) for telecom equipment manufacturing and support for start-ups in the sector, underscore the government's commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements.

DoT remains committed to creating and nurturing conditions for the orderly growth of the telecom sector through continuous policy reforms and foster a thriving and innovative telecom sector in India. We value the on-going collaboration with COAI and all stakeholders, and we look forward to achieving new milestones together.

New Delhi
17th May, 2024

(Neeraj Mittal)

कमरा नं. 210, संचार भवन, 20, अशोक रोड, नई दिल्ली-110001 / Room No. 210, Sanchar Bhawan, 20, Ashoka Road, New Delhi - 110001
Ph. : +91-11-23719898, Fax : +91-11-23711514, E-mail : secy-telecom@gov.in

COAI CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Shri Pramod K. Mittal
Chairman, COAI



The telecom sector continues to play a crucial role in India's digital economy with the sector contributing significantly to digitalization of other verticals of the economy.

With over 90% of the services dependent on the Internet, the trend is fast reaching the remote and rural parts of the country as well. There is a 200% increase in rural internet subscriptions between 2015 and 2021, in comparison to 158% in urban areas. The 5G rollouts are happening in India at a faster pace than anywhere in the world, with more than 4,19,000 5G base stations (BTS) having been installed by end of January 2024 itself.

This year, the government has taken various steps to encourage the growth of the telecom sector - such as auctioning spectrum and granting licenses, and also initiated policies to boost digitalization and broadband penetration in the country. We laud the Department of Telecommunications for the revised RoW Rules for rolling out mobile towers, optical fiber and other telecom infrastructure. These measures collectively improve the ease of conducting business in the sector while enabling cost-effective network deployment for widespread connectivity across the country, esp. 5G technology.

COAI compliments the progressive measure by the Ministry of Power and DoT for the continuous support on the power supply requirements for the telecom infrastructure. The adoption of these favourable regulations by the States will further cement the telecom industry's role in achieving our nation's renewable energy objectives, thus contributing to a sustainable future.

The Government of India has significantly contributed to the advancement of the telecom

sector by introducing the Telecommunications Act 2023, which is forward-looking and takes into account the evolving nature of technology and digitalization, ensuring that they remain relevant and effective in the future. Working hand-in-hand with the Government, TRAI has also initiated various consultation papers which are expected to address some crucial concerns/requirements such as digital inclusion and proliferation of the 5G ecosystem.

We further appreciate the Government's citizen centric initiative of launching the Sanchar Saathi portal, that will go a long way in empowering mobile subscribers across the country and ensuring the safety and security of the mobile devices. India's telecom companies are also working on upgrading their core networks which will provide the foundation for future digital services.

This year's India Mobile Congress (IMC 2023), the flagship event jointly organized by COAI and DoT, marked a significant shift in the narrative - the emergence of Indian startups and government entities in spaces once dominated by international conglomerates. It also emphasized the growing and important role of Women in the Technology.

COAI being the apex industry body representing the digital communications ecosystem in India, is actively involved in ensuring sustainability and stability for the sector, to help develop a robust telecom infrastructure which would contribute towards our 'Digital India'. COAI continues to work closely with all stakeholders to facilitate the growth of the sector to keep the nation connected, while aiming to ensure a robust and dynamic telecom infrastructure.

FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S DESK

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar
Director General, COAI

In the dynamic landscape of India's telecommunications sector, the year 2023-24 marked a momentous period characterized by transformative initiatives, particularly the nationwide rollout of 5G. Lauded as the fastest in the world, this strategic deployment, coupled with progressive government policies, has firmly positioned India as a global leader in the ongoing 5G revolution. In a remarkable feat, India has emerged as a Global 5G Leader, attaining the status of having the world's second largest 5G network within just 10 months, as well as the fastest in 5G rollout globally, establishing over 4.25 lakh 5G BTS sites across the country.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE DEVELOPMENTS OF 2023-24

Indian Telecommunications Bill 2023:

The telecom landscape in India witnessed a significant stride forward with the Telecommunications Act 2023 getting the assent of the President. This comprehensive legislative measure places a strong emphasis on fostering robust telecom networks, as evidenced by the well-defined chapter on Right of Way (RoW). The Act ensures granting of RoW in a non-discriminatory manner, coupled with a clear directive stating that the telecom network installed on any property shall not be considered as part of such property, including for the purposes of any transaction related to that property, or any property tax/levy/cess/fees/duties as may be applicable on that property. A notable provision is the prevention of coercive actions such as sealing or shutdowns without due permission from the Central Government. These positive measures are poised to facilitate the connection of Indians to a resilient digital network, spanning



the entire country. The act also demonstrates a commendable focus on clarifications and penalties. By introducing proportionality and nexus with the nature of the offense, it establishes a considered and rational approach to penalties. This step not only enhances industry confidence but also contributes to the ease of doing business.

A significant regulatory shift is the replacement of the term 'license' with 'authorization' in the legislation. This modification aims to simplify the overall regulatory landscape, bringing clarity to the authorization requirements for providing telecom services. Further, it also incorporates stringent provisions to address the unlawful interception of messages or unauthorized access, thereby bolstering national security. Notably, it places the authority to permit internet shutdowns exclusively to the Central Government, to ensure continued, uninterrupted and seamless telecom connectivity for all.

Leadership in 6G: A significant milestone in the industry was the commencement of work on 6G technology. Although still in the research phase, India is positioning itself as a global leader in 6G. The Prime Minister's unveiling of the "Bharat 6G Vision" document and establishing of 6G labs in India underscore a collective effort in shaping the future of telecom, contributing significantly to global 6G research. Industry players like Nokia and Ericsson are also establishing 6G labs in India, setting the stage for ground-breaking research and development.

Green Energy Open Access: COAI welcomed the Ministry of Power's progressive Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules 2023, which enables entities to aggregate

their load by multiple connections served by the same electricity division of a DISCOM to 100 kW or more, for being eligible to avail Open Access for Green Energy. This mechanism allows telecom operators to harness renewable energy under the open access route, fostering the use of green energy in the sector. 13 leading State Governments in India – Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh – have adopted this amendment to the Green Open Energy Access Rules as per the gazette notification by the Ministry of Power in May 2023. It would empower consumers to choose sustainable energy sources and contributes to India's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and fostering a cleaner energy future. The industry is pleased to see this long-standing demand being acknowledged as well as supported by the Government, and the growing adoption of facilitative Green Open Access by leading States and Union Territories across India, which vindicates the industry position on this matter. Besides being a key enabler of India's economic growth and prosperity, this essential infrastructure sector is also a responsible one, with clear objectives to shift progressively towards renewable and green energy use, thus supporting the nation's carbon reduction goals and sustainability efforts to contribute to a more environment friendly world. We expect this trend to snowball into faster adoption by other States/UTs in the near future.

Extension of MTCTE Phases 3 and 4: The Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) extended the implementation timelines for Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE), addressing industry challenges. These extensions would aid the industry which has been facing significant challenges in the operationalization of Phases 3 and 4 of the MTCTE, primarily owing to issues like non-availability and limited capability of testing labs, absence of defined timelines for testing procedures, and lack of benchmarks for both testing charges and certification charges. The

delays and complexities of these procedures could potentially impact the implementation schedules of the 5G rollouts and fiberisation targets of India. COAI appreciates this positive decision made by the DoT and TEC, taking into consideration the industry's earnest submissions and keeping in mind the critical challenges faced by the sector towards compliance with the earlier notified timelines. We believe that the Government found merit in our submissions and has taken a practical decision based on the ground realities with regard to the Testing and Certification ecosystem for telecom equipment in the country.

Recommendations on Submarine Cable Landing:

TRAI recommended the use of Indian-owned vessels for submarine cable maintenance, reducing reliance on foreign providers. The Authority's recommendations crucially recognize submarine cables as critical assets and provision protective measures for them, while also encouraging self-reliance and focusing on enhancing efficiency and security. The recommendations are positive overall and will help in enhancing the robustness of the Submarine Cables ecosystem in India, which would add to the growth of the digital communications sector by strengthening our national infrastructure.

The recommendation that Indian Entities be facilitated and incentivized for setting up of the 'Cable Depots' will help in further development of the Submarine Cables ecosystem in India. The recommendation on considering the submarine cable and CLS as a critical asset, and that a section should be added in the Indian Telecommunications Act to promote, protect and prioritize 'Cable Landing Station' and 'submarine cable' in India is also a positive one. It is also appreciated that the damage to sub-sea infra has been recommended to be considered as damage to Critical Infrastructure of national importance, and is to be strictly dealt under the Indian laws. COAI commends the measures proposed for Indian Flagged Repair Vessels including constituting a committee to study and recommend the different financial viability models and possible

incentives from Government. Additionally, the recommendation that survey data be collected under the supervision of MoD and Indian representatives/responsible Licensee officials, who shall ensure adequate safeguards, rather than the mandatory requirement that DoT representatives be present during surveys of submarine cable routes conducted by TSPs, is also well received by the industry.

Indian Telegraph RoW (Amendment) Rules, 2023: COAI welcomed the new amended RoW rules, which is a positive step forward for the industry and will contribute to faster deployment of 5G services in the country. The amendment allows licensees to set up temporary overhead telegraph infrastructure, facilitating rapid repairs and network connectivity, which will enable rapid network reinstatement in the event of underground telecom infrastructure damage, besides expediting 5G rollout by utilizing the state's existing infrastructure, simplifying application procedures for multiple small cell sites and allocating Central Government areas for small cell deployment at no cost. These measures will collectively enhance ease of doing business within the sector, while aiding in expansive network deployments for ubiquitous connectivity across the country. However, the real benefits of the RoW Rules would depend upon their effective implementation by local authorities in letter and spirit. The industry looks forward to working with State Governments and different agencies to bring these changes on ground and speed up as well as smoothen the network deployments.

Improving Infrastructure in North-East India: In 2023, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) took proactive measures to bridge the digital divide, proposing specific measures to enhance telecom infrastructure in underserved Northeastern States. The TRAI recommendations represent a positive stride, with potential to significantly boost the region's socio-economic and digital advancement through improved telecom and broadband services.

Interim Budget 2024: The Interim Budget 2024, reemphasized the Government's economic

policies and the commitment to sustained growth, improving productivity and creating opportunities with a focus on skilling and reskilling. In a significant gain for the telecom sector just before the interim budget, the current customs duty exemption granted to vessels engaged in laying submarine cables in India - which was supposed to lapse on 31.03.2024, was extended up to 30.09.2024. Since telecom companies depend heavily on submarine cables for the high-speed transfer of data around the globe, this step will help in following the compliances.

The announcement of a corpus of ₹1 lakh crore for the technology sector is also a positive measure as access to capital is a critical factor to support innovation and growth. The long-term, interest-free or low interest rate loans and focus on deep tech will further encourage the private sector to scale up research and innovation. COAI remains hopeful that in the post-election full budget, the industry's suggestions to reduce regulatory levies like License Fee, deferring USOF contribution till the existing funds are exhausted, exemption of Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on Telecom equipment, waiving of GST on regulatory payments and refund of unutilised ITC, among others, will be considered and addressed by the Government.

Union Cabinet's approval on establishment of three semiconductor units under the India Semiconductor Mission: This is a progressive step for India and the strongly emerging manufacturing ecosystem in the country. This commendable development serves as an excellent example for our nation towards attaining self-sufficiency in line with our Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of 'Atmanirbharta' and will further inspire India's goals to become a global manufacturing and supply chain hub. Moreover, with the output from these facilities being poised to benefit various sectors and segments, it is expected to provide a fillip to the 'Digital India' mission through increased technological prowess and advancement of the indigenous industrial ecosystem, besides generating employment and attracting more investments in the country.

Launch of the Chakshu application: COAI complimented the Ministry of Communications and DoT on this positive measure, which is a path-breaking initiative to help mitigate the increasing number of cyber frauds in today's fast-growing digital era. The rise in unsolicited communications such as spam calls and messages, has necessitated tightened regulations and trials - to create a more secure and user-friendly telecom environment. The Indian TSPs are working closely with the Regulator and the Government in the efforts to curb this menace. Critical issues like cyber frauds require all stakeholders to work together to truly make an impact on the ground. This initiative would help channelize our citizens to come on a single platform led by the Government and actively contribute by sharing knowledge to help prevent such undesired and malicious activities.

INDUSTRY ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION

Fair Share Contribution from LTGs: Telecom service providers (TSPs) in India have been steadfastly advocating for a fair share contribution from the large traffic generators (LTGs) who generate disproportionately high traffic on the networks, highlighting the need for a more equitable distribution of costs. While TSPs diligently invest in network infrastructure and technology upgrades, these LTGs reap substantial profits without bearing a fair share of the associated costs. This disparity places an undue burden on TSPs, impacting their financial sustainability and hindering their ability to invest in future upgrades. The call for a more equitable contribution from LTGs arises not as an impediment to innovation but as a necessary measure to ensure the continued growth and viability of the essential telecom sector. The introduction of the proposed Lowering Broadband Costs for Consumers Act of 2023 in the U.S. Senate was another pivotal development, which clearly establishes the need for various 'Edge Service providers' which generate disproportionately large traffic, i.e., LTGs, to contribute towards infrastructure costs to make digital connectivity affordable for the end-users. This is a global acknowledgement

of this need by LTGs to contribute to network costs and vindicates the position of the Indian Telecom sector. It is imperative that the LTGs contribute to this rising infrastructure cost, especially as we look forward to an era of increasing convergence of services and verticals, with more bandwidth-heavy applications expected to emerge therein.

COAI's White Paper on "Addressing Rising Data Traffic and Associated Infrastructure Costs in Indian Telecom", released in January 2024, delved into the debate and adopted a practical approach using statistics and facts to arrive at conclusions logically, by studying the emerging scenario, the significance of responsible sharing of infrastructure development, maintenance and upgradation costs, and brought out the need for contribution by different stakeholders. The analysis led to 5 models of resolution to the issue, with 2 of them being workable solutions. The final recommended model keeps MSMEs and Startups out of the ambit of fair-share (as consistently maintained and intended by the TSPs), and shows that the burden on the TSPs due to the LTGs' growing traffic patterns, even without the smaller players, is substantial and needs to be addressed. The recommended solution also puts to rest all alleged concerns related to net neutrality, double charging, dubious proposal to increase consumer tariffs, etc. Further, an additional de-novo financial analysis based on the White Paper, which was submitted to the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, shows that the additional capex required by TSPs to provide the infrastructure to carry the LTG-related data traffic for the year 2023 alone amounts to approx. INR 10,000 crores. Accordingly, the proposed fair share to TSPs on the amount would have resulted in enhancing AGR-related licence fees and USOF levies (combined 8% of AGR) to almost INR 800 crores for the Government, which is presently not being received. The financial analysis also shows that for offsetting the additional capex spends by adding subscribers, as proposed by some quarters, telcos would need an additional 50 crore subscribers for the 2023 period alone, on a notional ARPU of INR 200. It is evident going by the current subscriber count of 114 crores

that this additional subscriber base of 50 crores is unachievable and impractical to imagine. The broadening funnel observed between baseline TSP traffic and the combined data traffic from TSPs, LTGs and others, which continues to increase, indicates that even higher quality infrastructure would be required to be provided going ahead. The additional infrastructure cost to carry this aggregated data, being due to LTG traffic, needs to be contributed by LTGs.

Further, media stories reported developments whereby an Appstore provider, which is also a foremost Large Traffic Generator (LTG) globally, was learnt to remove startups and smaller India-made applications/players from its online property, quoting reasons of non-payment of their quoted charges to these applications, for hosting them. Ironically, these same LTGs vehemently oppose the proposal for a fair-share contribution for the additional costs borne by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) for carrying their disproportionately large traffic and provisioning the increasingly demanding infrastructure required to deliver so. The above is evidently against the spirit of the Government's flagship and commendable 'Make in India' program as well as the progressive approach to foster innovation and encourage smaller organisations, as clearly articulated by the Hon'ble Union Minister of Communications & IT and Railways.

The app stores are making huge revenues from both the app developers and buyers/users of apps, besides profiting from monetizing the users' data, displaying ads and engaging in other businesses. It is rather surprising that these LTGs, which are generally global corporates based in foreign countries, are ready to evict non-paying small businesses as they expect the "immense value" that their platform provides to the apps, while in turn prefer themselves to enjoy a free-ride over the TSPs' networks, and at the same time profiting heavily from them.

Allocation of 6 GHz Spectrum Band for 5G/IMT Services: The 6 GHz spectrum band emerges as a valuable asset for enhancing mobile networks' quality and coverage. Allotting this

spectrum to 5G communications becomes crucial to meet the escalating demand for data services. With the potential to revolutionize wide-area applications, including telemedicine and smart cities, 5G takes center stage as a catalyst for transformative change and needs to be supported aptly with requisite spectrum. The recent decision by the World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC) to open up the 100 MHz spectrum in the 6 GHz band for mobility services globally underscores the importance of allocating this spectrum for IMT services in India. Further, 600 MHz has been identified for IMT in Region 1 and Region 3. Now, India can add its name in 2027 (WRC-27) for the IMT use of this band, without going through the sharing study. We believe that DoT will constitute a committee to consider the updated ITU Radio Regulations (RR) to formulate the updated NFAP to include this band for IMT services.

Moreover, a global development in March 2024, whereby a legislation* has been introduced in the USA Senate, requiring some government-owned mid-band spectrum to be auctioned off to boost commercial wireless 5G networks, indicates that hasty decisions in this regard may be counter-productive for India. Two USA Senators have introduced the "Spectrum Pipeline" bill, which would require the USA Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to identify at least 2,500 MHz of mid-band spectrum that could be reallocated from federal govt. use to non-govt. or shared use over the next 5 years. The bill would require the FCC to auction at least 1,250 MHz of spectrum for full-power commercial wireless services, including 5G, within six years - and at least 600 megahertz within 3 years. COAI has, time and again, pointed out that global examples should not be followed without due deliberations and also alerted that delicensing is an irreversible process and once done, it means we cannot get the spectrum back for meaningful use. Therefore, India must not fall into a similar undesired position by following some global precedents under pressure from propaganda

by vested interests. India's dense population, higher spectrum loading and massive user base would create a much bigger problem than the USA, if such a precious resource is not utilised optimally.

Need for Industrial/Utility Electricity Tariff Rates for Telecom Infrastructure: The high cost of commercial electricity tariffs emerges as a challenge in meeting the escalating power demand of the sector, esp. telecom towers. Telcos face hurdles in expanding networks and delivering quality services due to exorbitant electricity charges. A shift to industrial tariffs or renewable energy subsidies is imperative to spur investment, improve network quality and become more cost-efficient. As per a TRAI report¹, the high cost of electricity constitutes nearly 25% of operational expenses for telecom service providers. This translates to billions of dollars diverted from network upgrades and expansion, ultimately impacting millions of users, and hindering India's digital ambitions. This makes it all the more necessary for the LTGs to share revenue with the telecom service providers. Government intervention, in the form of targeted policy initiatives and collaborative efforts with the industry, is crucial to overcome this roadblock and unleash the transformative potential of telecom.

Rationalisation of EMF Exposure Norms: The license condition pertaining to human-exposure requirements in India need to be revised and aligned with the latest ICNIRP 2020 levels, to be in line with international standards and the EIRP/transmit power limits also need to be revised accordingly.

WHO has recommended that 'National authorities should adopt international standards to protect their citizens against adverse levels of RF fields.' The international standards referred to are developed by the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)/ Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). The main conclusion from the WHO reviews is that EMF exposures below the limits recommended in the ICNIRP international

guidelines do not appear to have any known consequences on health. India needs to be at par with global standards to be able to effectively leverage the benefits of digital technology advancement and growth.

D2M network: While COAI appreciates the Government's underlying policy intent to leverage broadcasting capabilities to offload unicast traffic from mobile networks, to deliver video content to the consumers through broadcasting and save bandwidth, the proposal for the Direct-to-Mobile (D2M) network requires re-evaluation on the aspects of level playing field, spectrum allocation, network integration, and regulatory and cost arbitrage in favour of the proposed PPP model and against the TSPs. The present proposal on spectrum assignment for a D2M network for broadcasting content delivery to smartphones and other devices needs to be reviewed comprehensively, especially from a level playing field point of view and to ensure that it does not become a source of regulatory arbitrage. The spectrum envisaged for D2M Service (i.e., 526 – 582 MHz) should be allocated to the service providers to use broadcasting capabilities (D2M) as per the market requirements on the spectrum assigned through auctions.

Also, the Consultative Committee of TEC for adoption of proposed ATSC 3.0 standards into National Standard noted several shortcomings in the same. The Committee recommended that global precedents of the technology, coexistence studies and impact on mobile networks need to be shared by TSDSI. Further, clarification has been sought on the applicability of this standard for commercially available mobile handsets, as none support this standard currently. It also needs to be considered that after adoption, the documents will be allotted TEC document numbers and hosted on the TEC website. ATSC 3.0 being a technology owned by a foreign entity, it is not clear if copyright permission/authorization for the same could be granted by TEC. The other issues include lack of support for NavIC, Digital

¹ <https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/4-main.pdf>

Rights Management (DRM) and next-generation audio codecs, etc. Importantly, there seems to be an incorrect assumption that a dedicated D2M network is required for sending alerts during disasters. Cellular networks have been successfully delivering SMS-based disaster alert messages through Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) platform, and trials for Cell Broadcast method have also been conducted for such situations.

Cybersecurity: With the lightning-fast rate of innovation, the need for a multifaceted approach to cybersecurity is more significant than ever. Technologies like edge computing, blockchain, AI, IoT and digital tokens offer opportunities but also pose a challenge to security. Protocols, firmware updates and secure architectures are essential for a safe digital future.

THE ASSOCIATION'S UPDATES

The Association welcomed ACES as a new Associate Member in the COAI family during 2023-24.

The **COAI Executive Council** – headed by **Chairman - Mr. Pramod Kumar Mittal, Vice Chairman - Mr. P. Balaji**, and comprising senior

representatives from all member operators are, as always, an integral part of the progress that the Association has been making. My special thanks to the Chairman and the Vice Chairman for their commitment and active involvement in the activities and initiatives of the Association, and we look forward to their continued support and guidance going forward.

The Executive Council was also ably assisted by professional advice from the various Working **Committees** set up in COAI. I express my gratitude and appreciation to all the Committees and **Working Groups**, their **Chairpersons** and **Vice-Chairpersons**, for providing their unstinted support and cooperation, and taking out time from their busy schedules to contribute to various industry issues and help the association represent itself in a proficient manner.

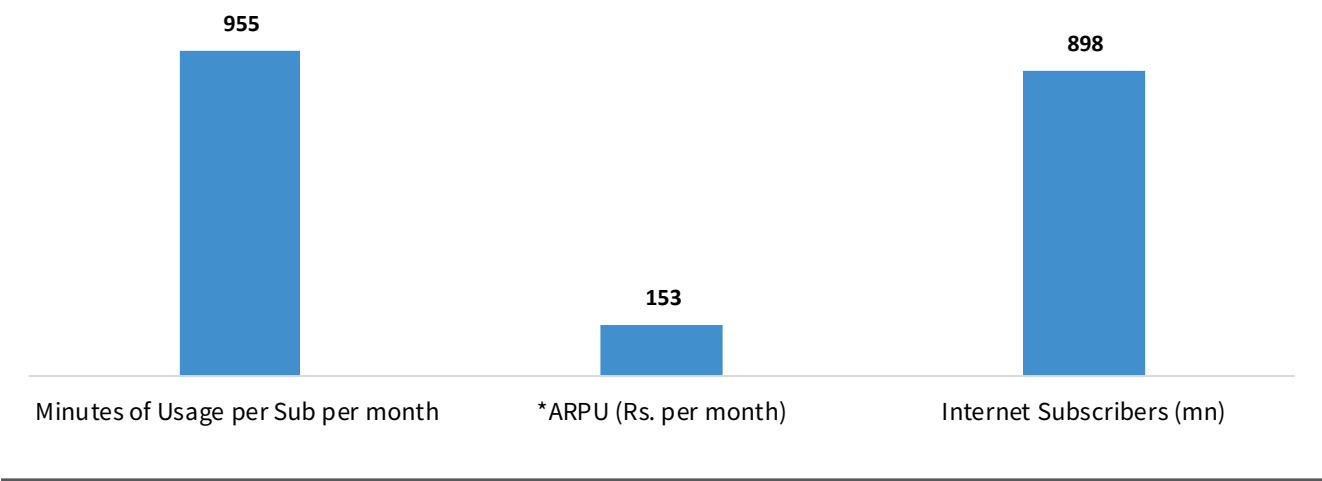
Last but not the least, I would like to place on record my deep gratitude to the **COAI Secretariat** team, which has always provided excellent support, dedication and assistance in all our endeavors. I deeply appreciate their efforts in contributing significantly to all the achievements of COAI.



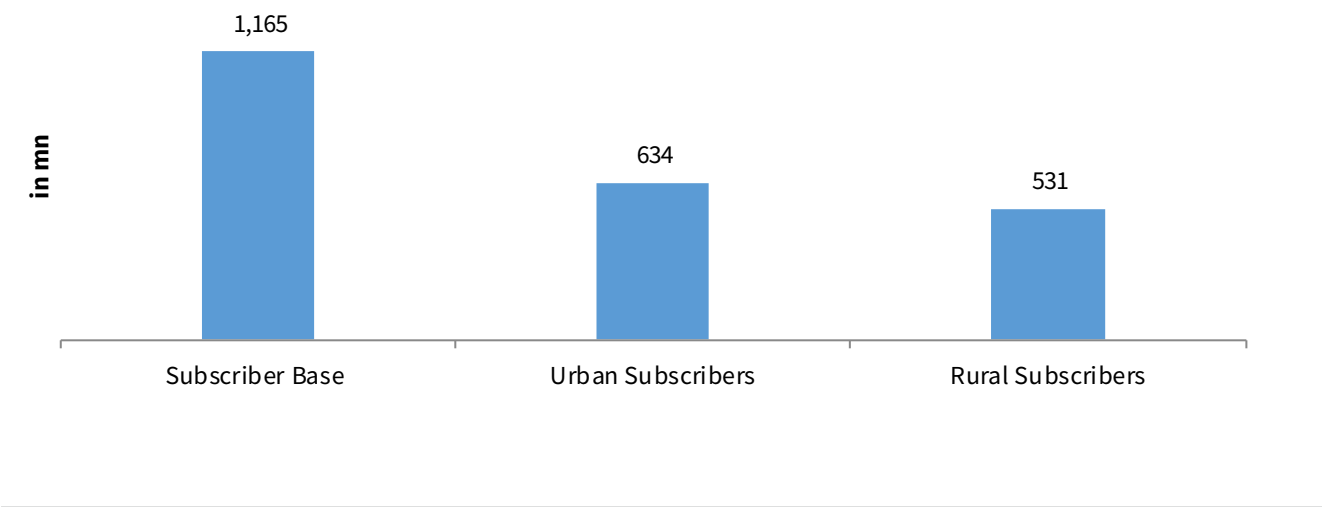
05 INDIAN WIRELESS INDUSTRY – AN OVERVIEW

Key Statistics of the Wireless Industry in India

A. Wireless Industry in India - Snapshot



As on 31 Dec 2023



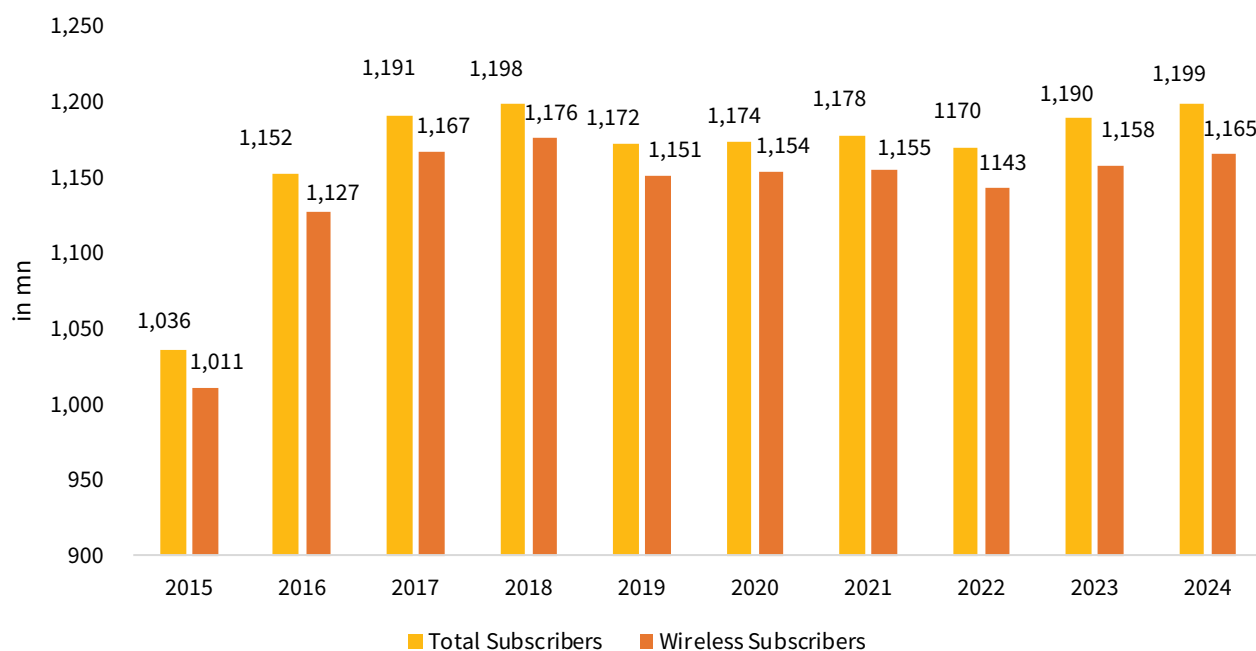
As on 31 March 2024

Source: TRAI

Note: *ARPU arrived after adjusting interconnect usage charges and roaming settlement charges.



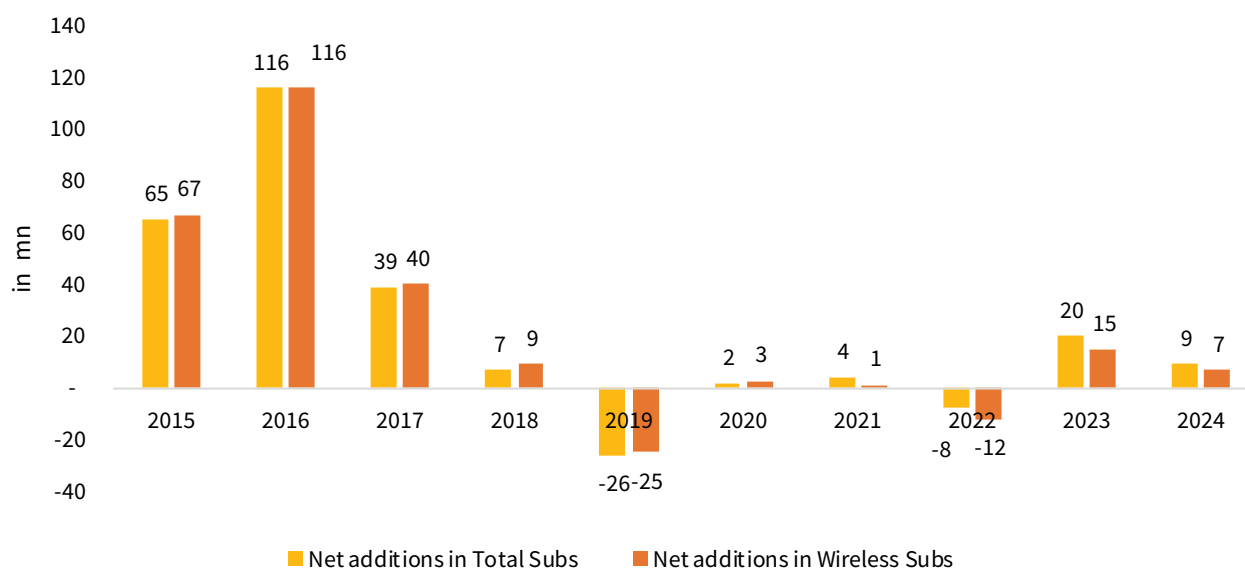
B. All India Total & Wireless Subscribers



Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2024 which is as of 31 Mar 2024, as per TRAI Reports

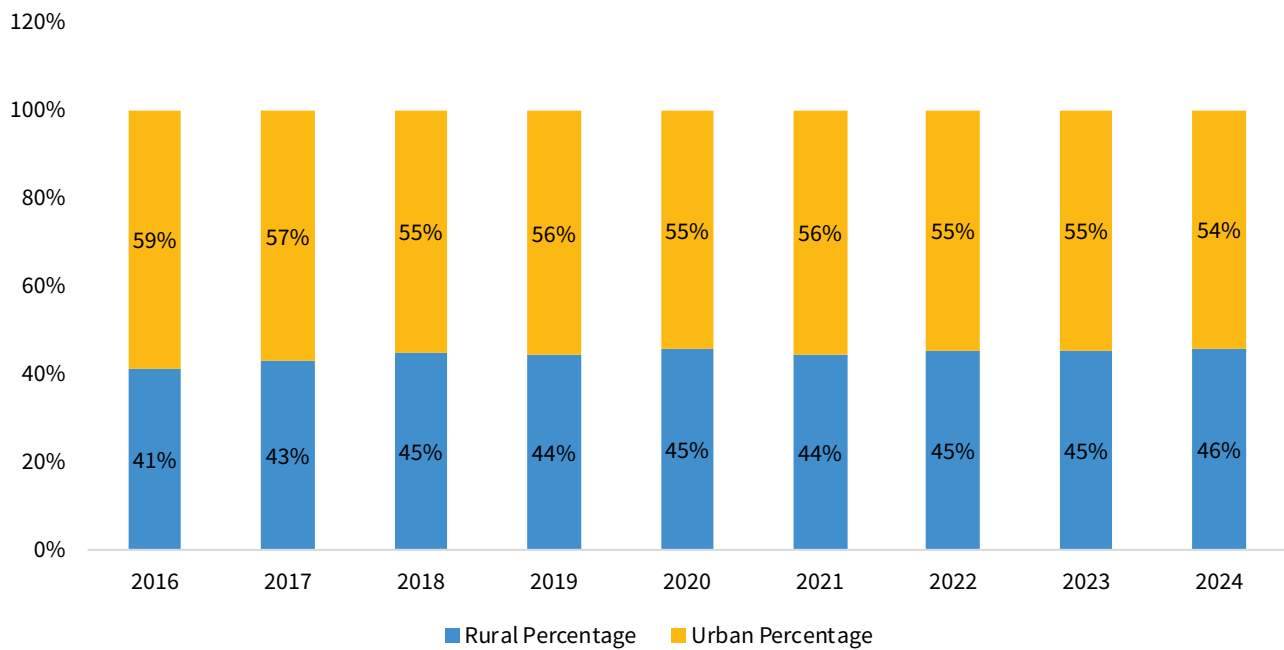
C. All India Total & Wireless Subscribers - Annual Net Additions



Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2024 addition which is one quarter addition till Mar 2024, as per TRAI Reports.

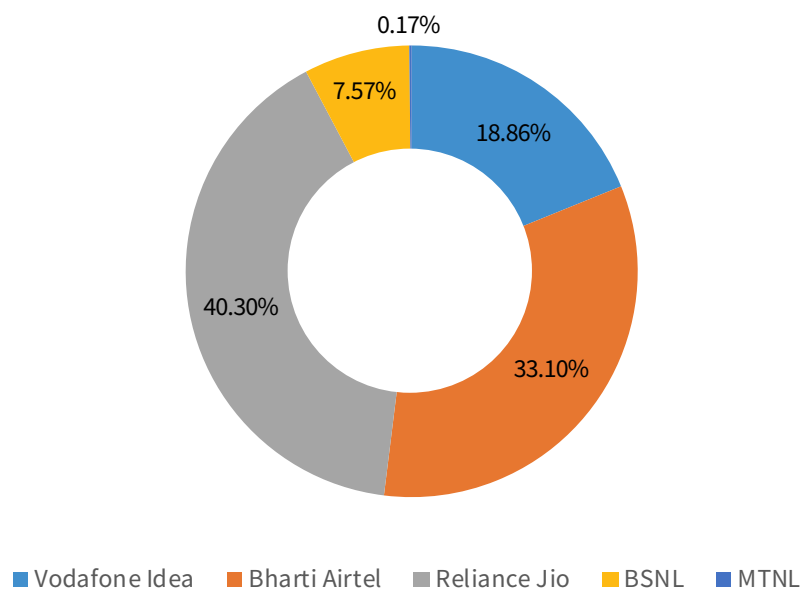
D. Wireless - Rural & Urban Subs as % of Total Subs



Source: TRAI

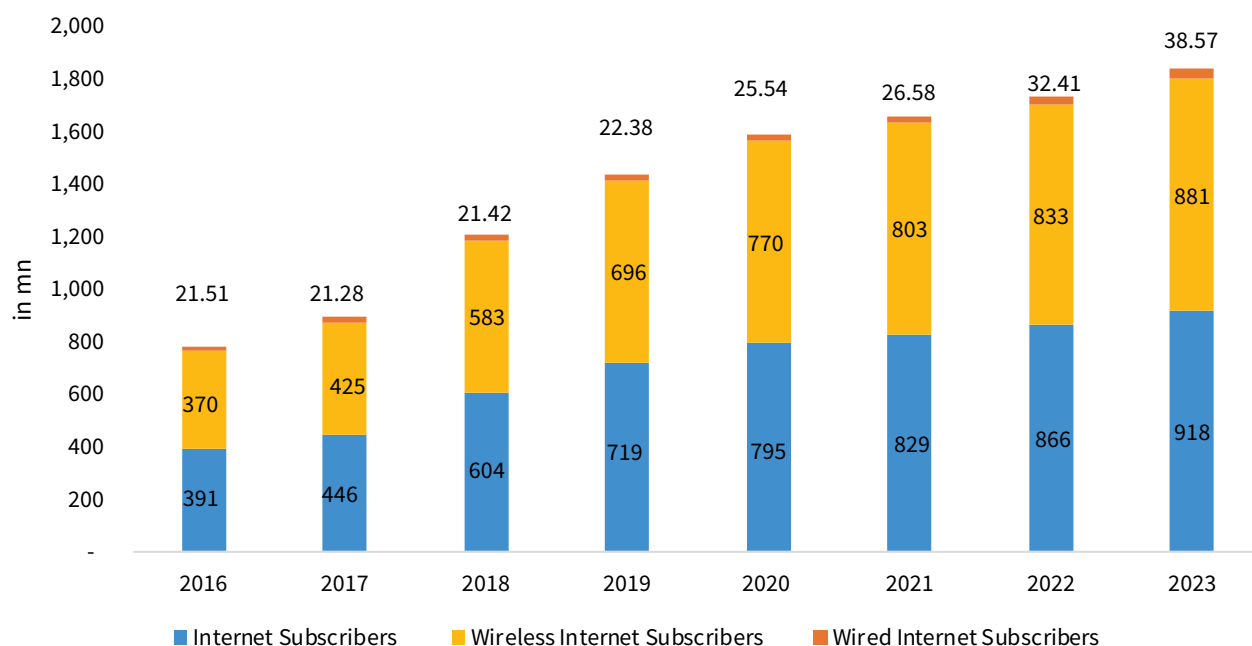
Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2024 which is as of 31 Mar 2024, as per TRAI Reports

E. Subscriber Market Share of Wireless Operators (Mar 2024)



Source: TRAI

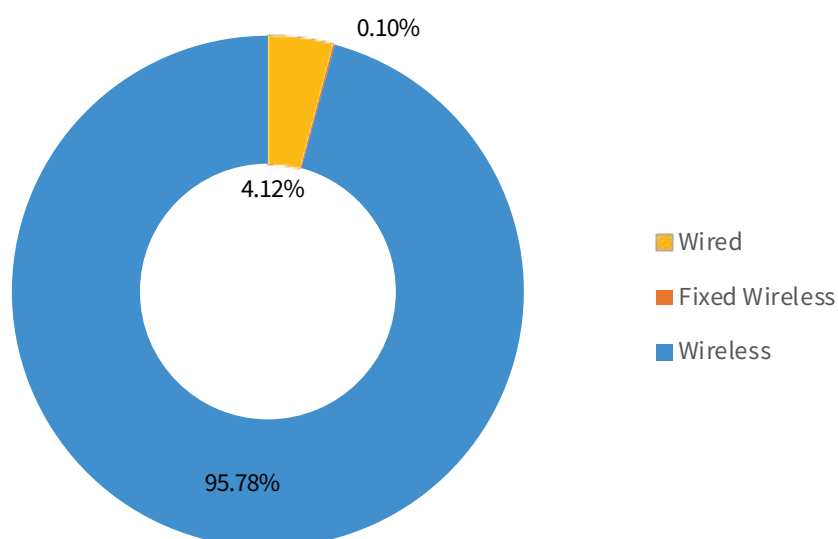
F. All India Total, Wireless & Wired Internet Subscribers



Source: TRAI

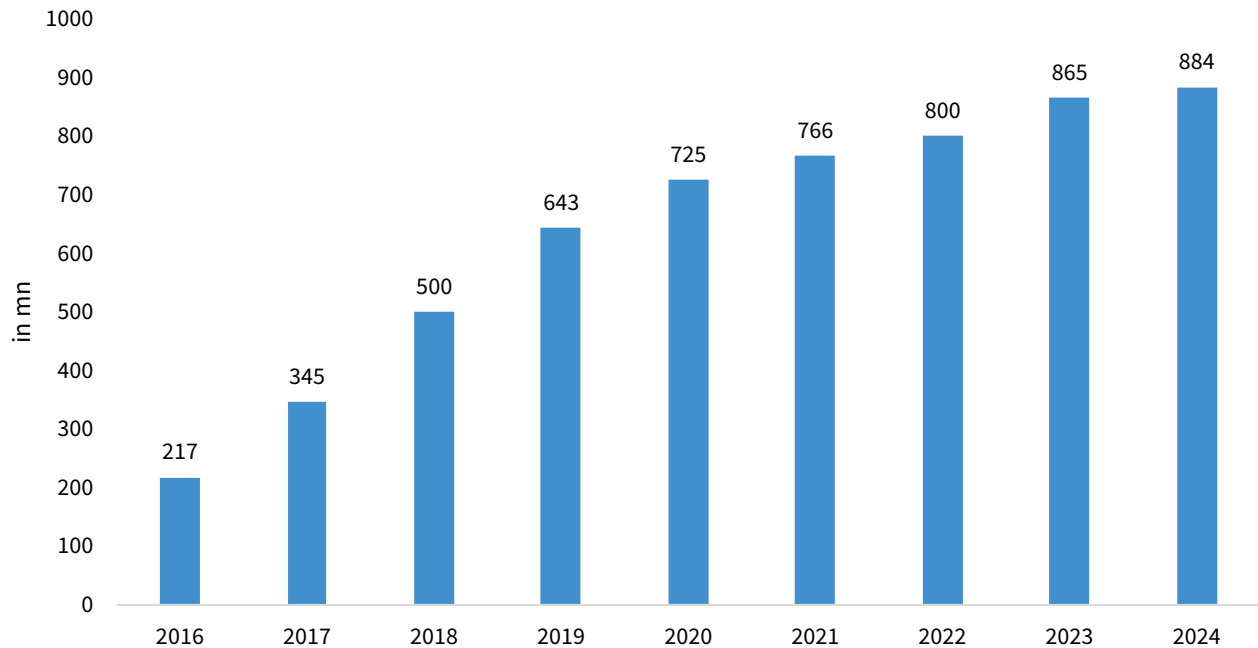
Note: Figures are as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

G. Composition of Internet Subscribers – Dec 2023



Source: TRAI

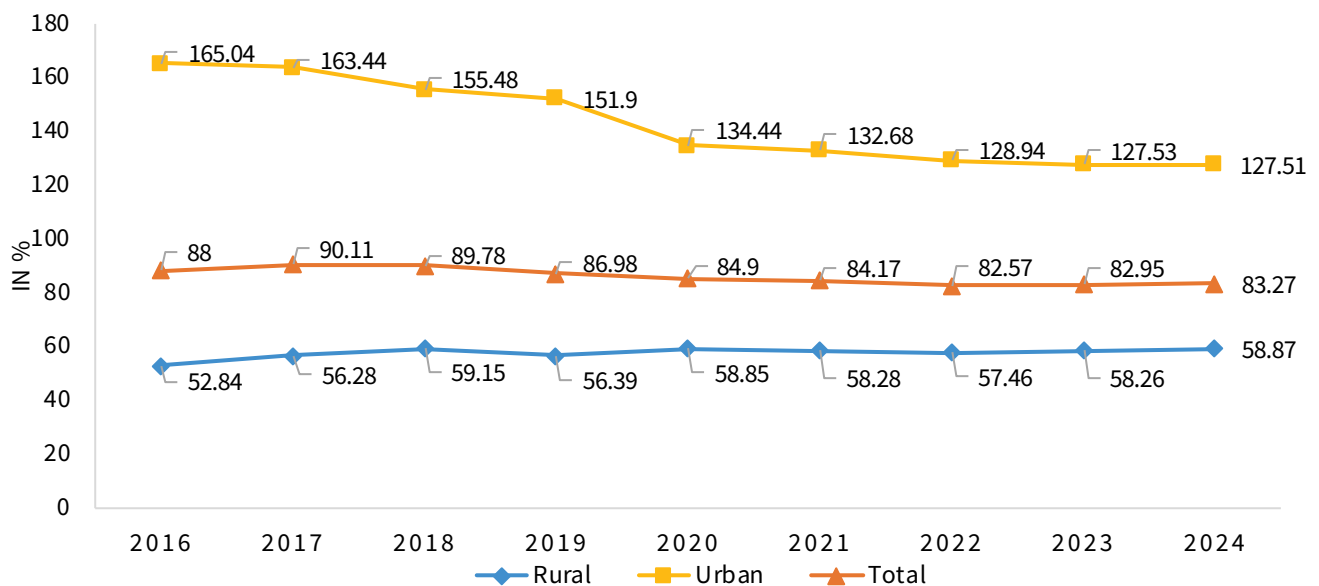
H. Mobile Broadband Subscribers



Source: TRAI

Note: Figures are as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

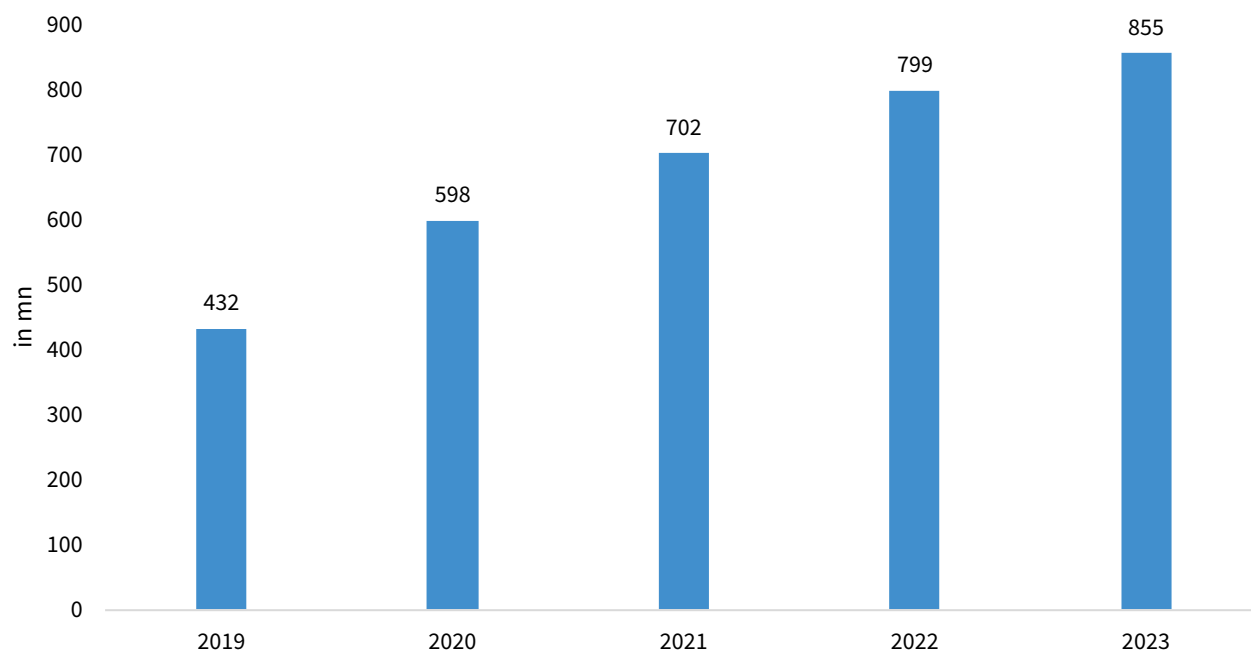
I. Total Wireless Teledensity (%)



Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec, except for 2024 which is as of 31 Mar 2024, as per TRAI Reports

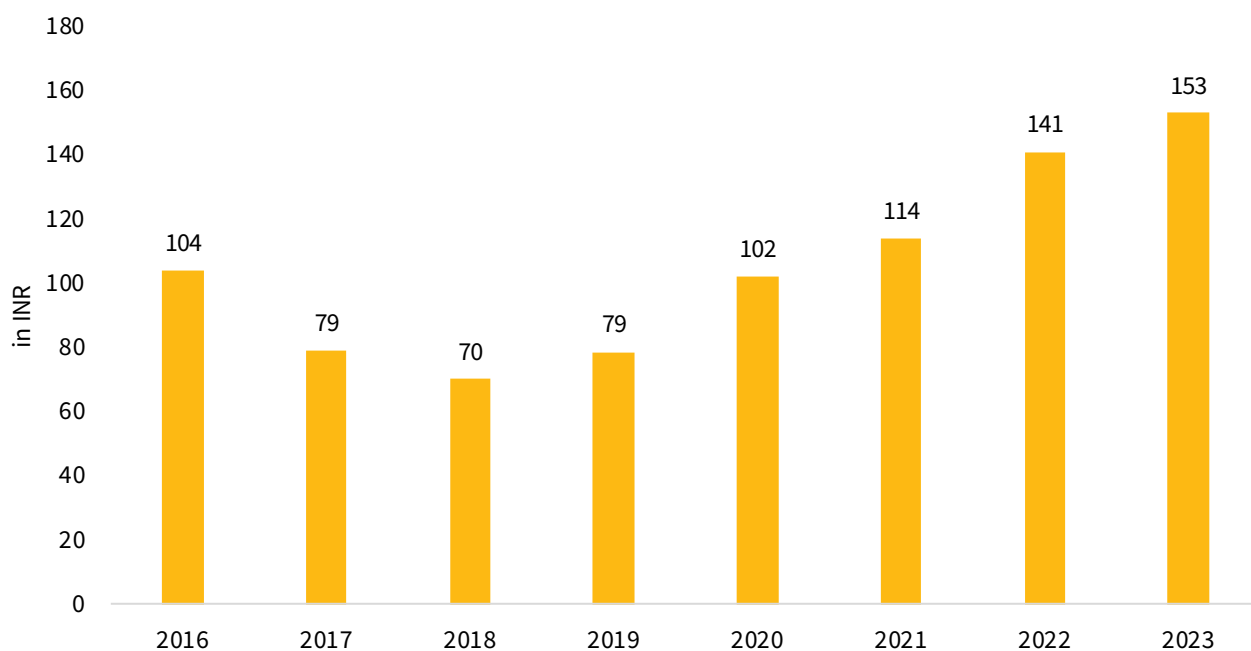
J. Data Subs (4G+5G)



Source: Nokia Mbit Report 2024, Operator Quarterly results, TRAI

Figures of years 2022 & 2023 includes 5G Subscribers.

K. Monthly ARPU of Wireless Services

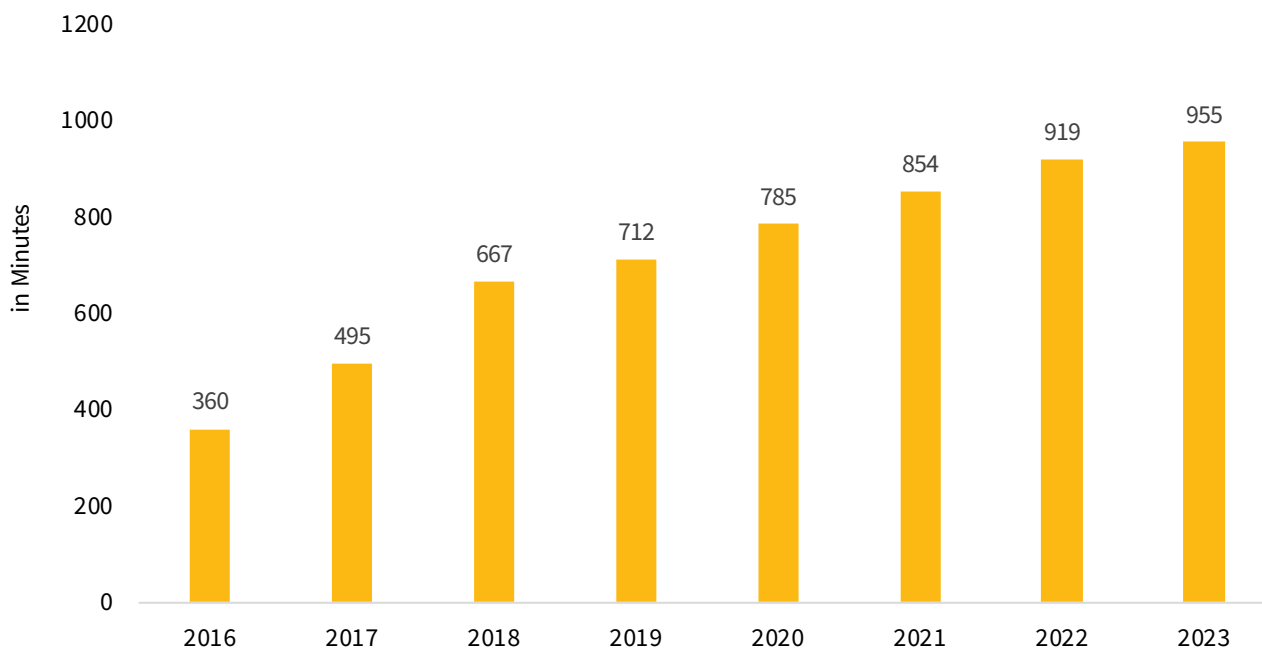


Source: TRAI

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

ARPU arrived at after adjusting interconnect usage charges and roaming settlement charges.

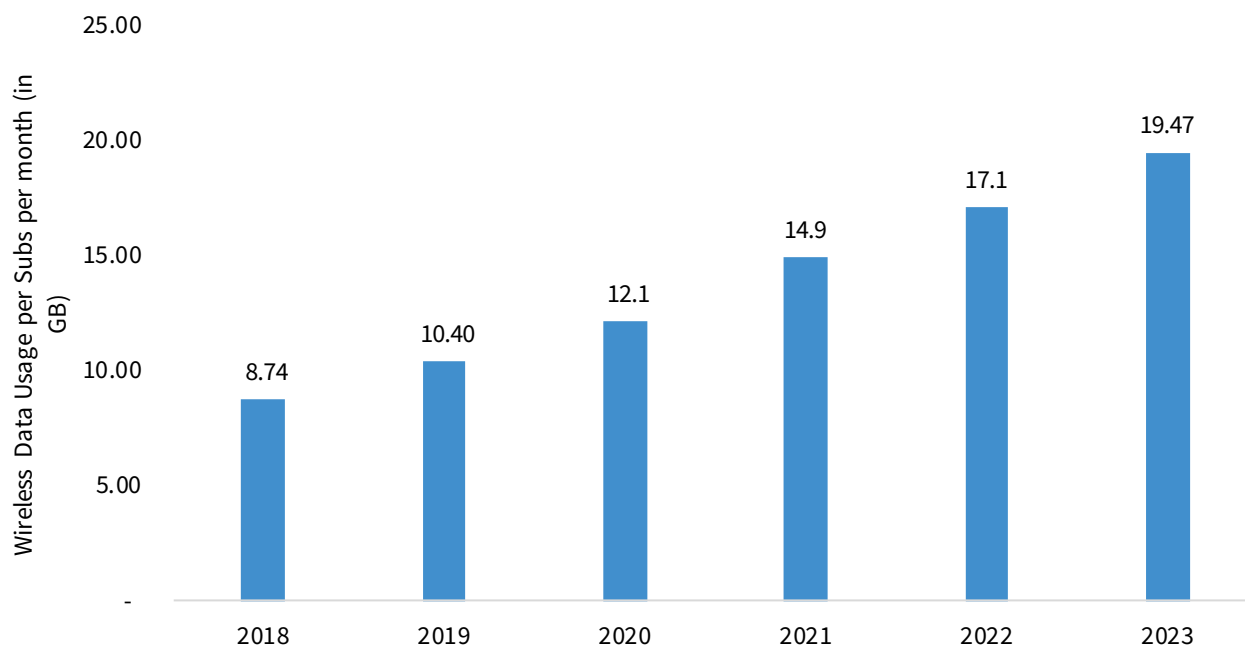
L. Minutes of Usage (Voice Calls) per Subscriber per month – Wireless



Source: TRAI PIR

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

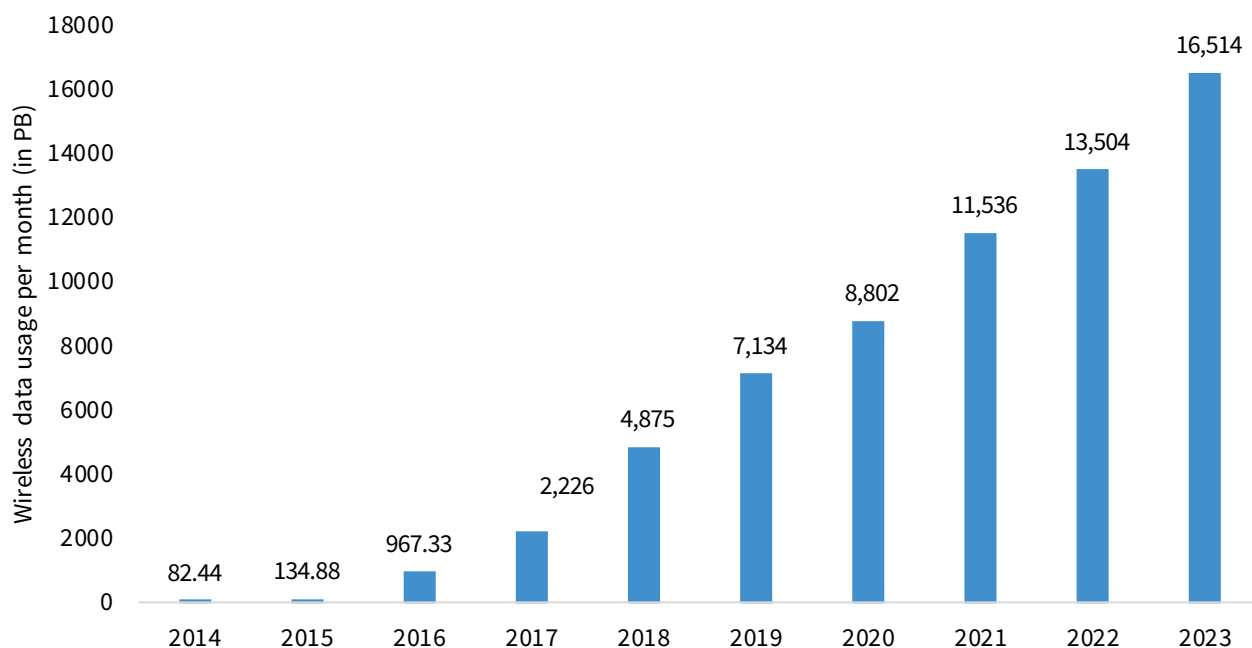
M. Wireless Data usage per sub/month (in GB)



Source: TRAI PIR

Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports

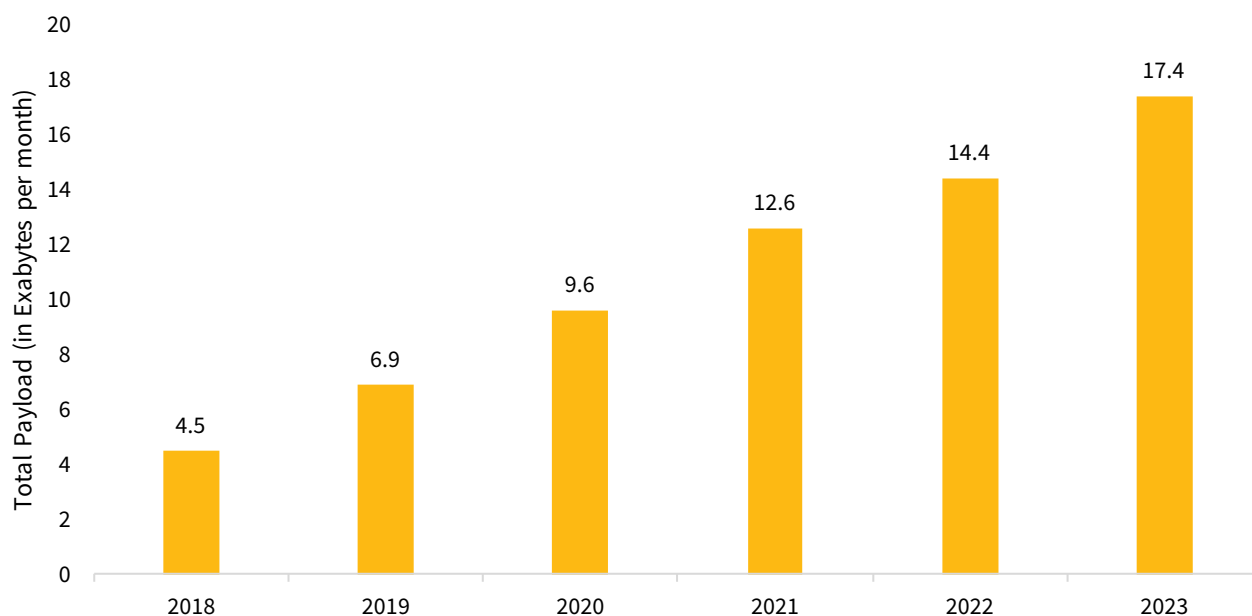
N. Wireless Data Usage (in PB) per month



Source: TRAI PIR

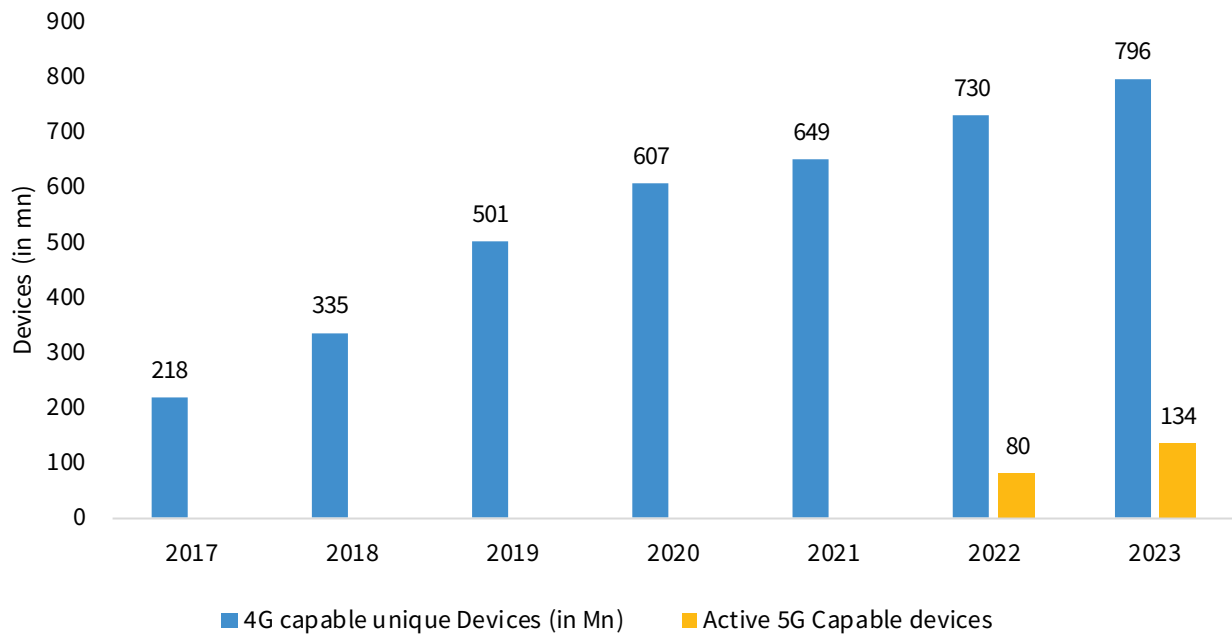
Note: All the data is as of 31 Dec for every year, as per TRAI Reports.

O. Total Data Payload



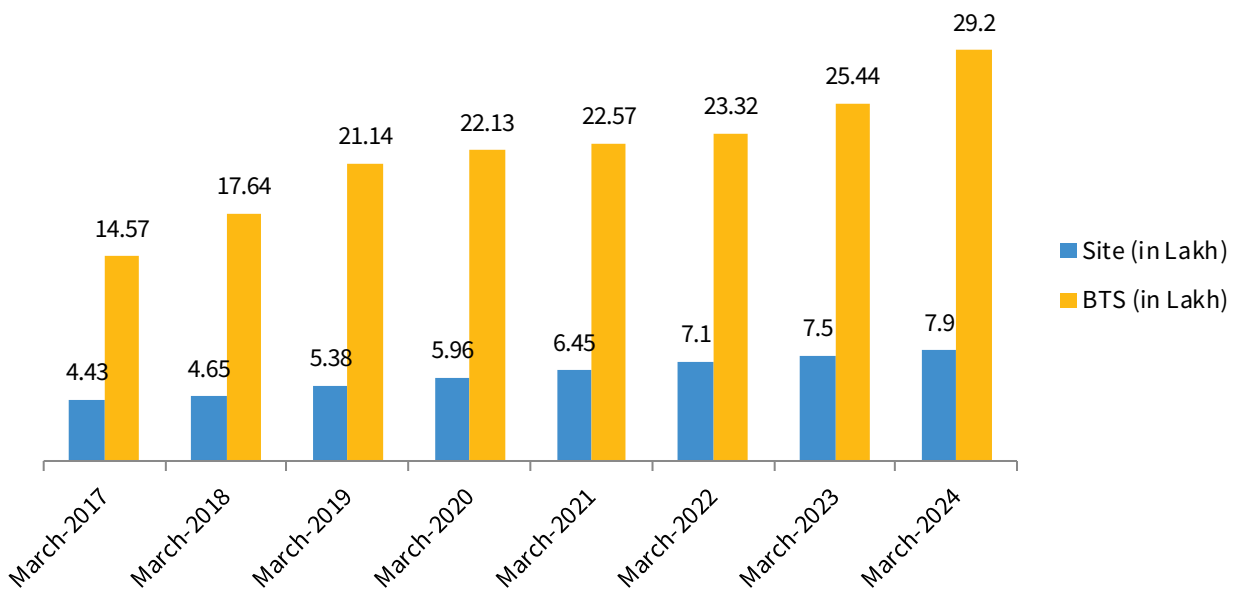
Source: Nokia MBiT 2024

P. 4G & 5G capable unique Devices (in Mn)



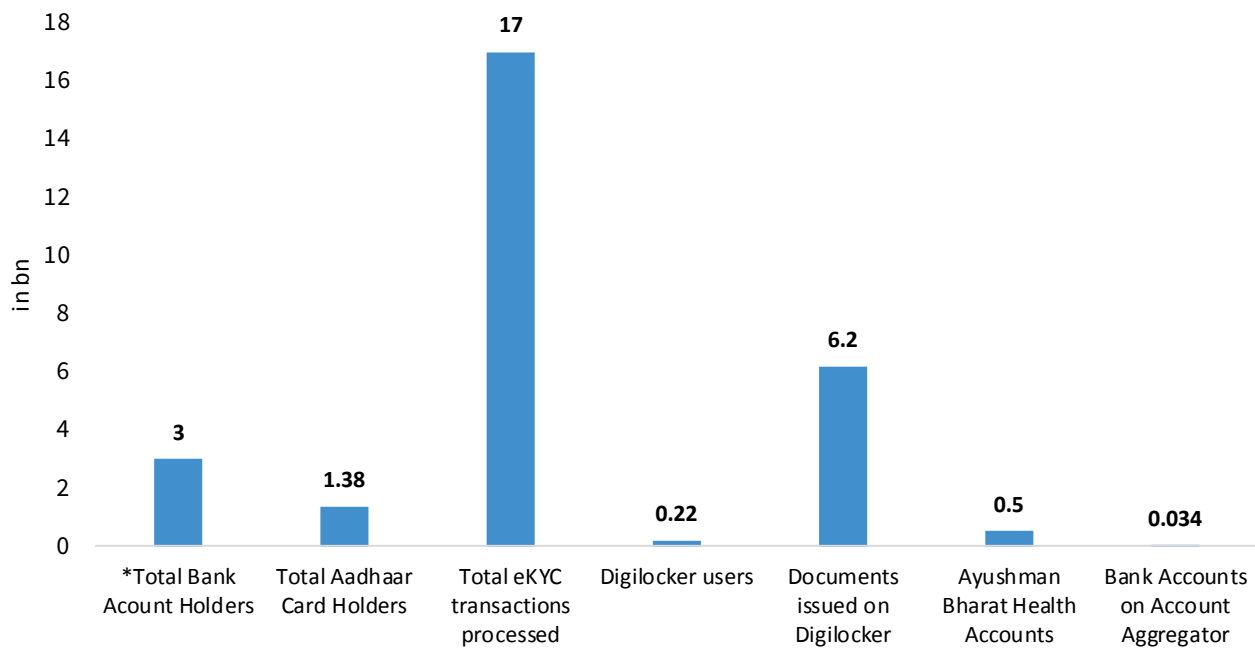
Source: Nokia MBiT Report 2024

Q. Total Number of Sites and BTS



Source: Tarang Sanchar

R. India’s Digital Public Infrastructure

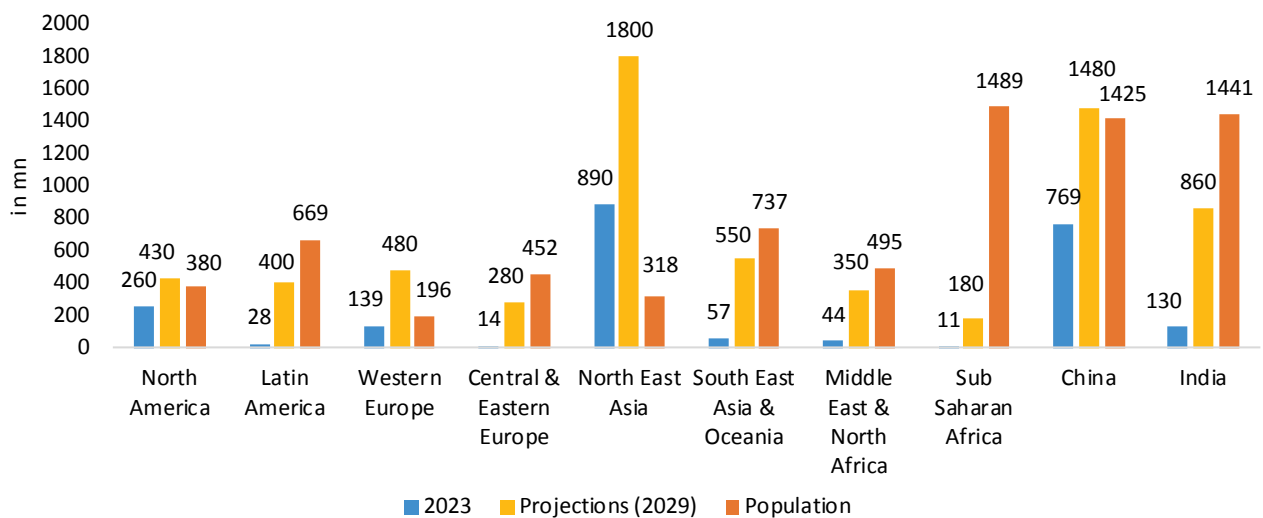


Source: Inc42 Analysis (as of Dec 2023)
*Bank Account holders data is as of Mar 2023.





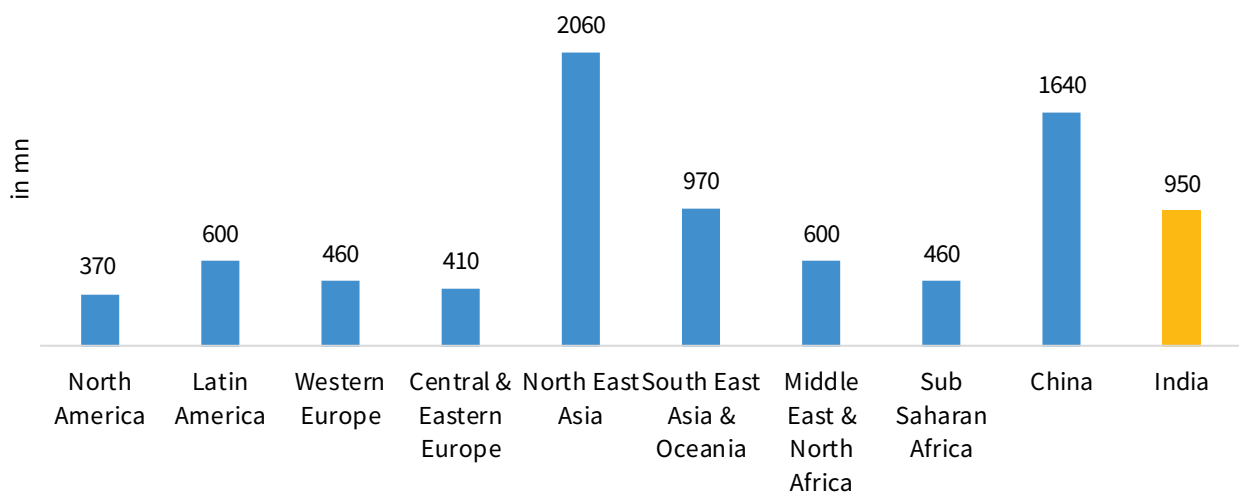
A. 5G Subscriptions



Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2023), Worldometer (2024)

Note: India data includes Nepal & Bhutan

B. Smartphone Users

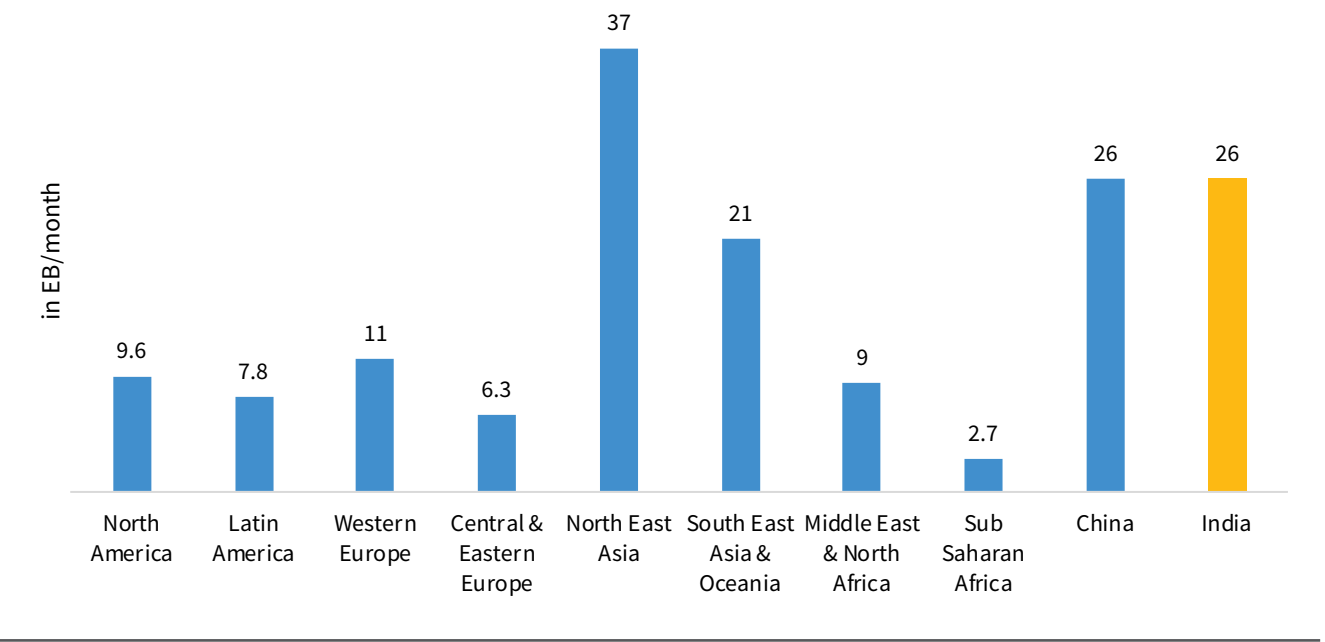


Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2023)

Note: India data includes Nepal & Bhutan



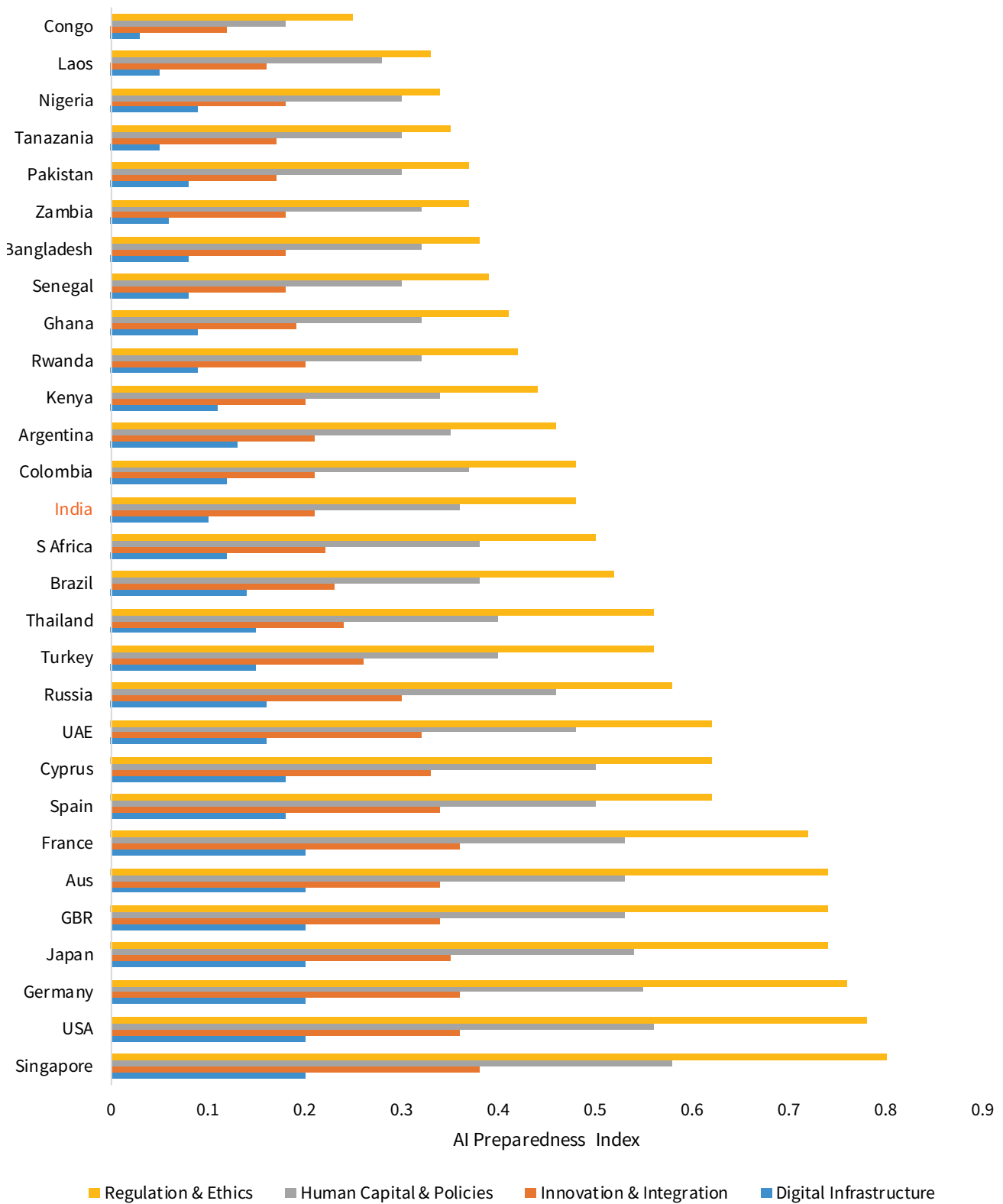
C. Global Mobile data traffic



Source: Ericsson Mobility Report (2023)
Note: India data includes Nepal & Bhutan

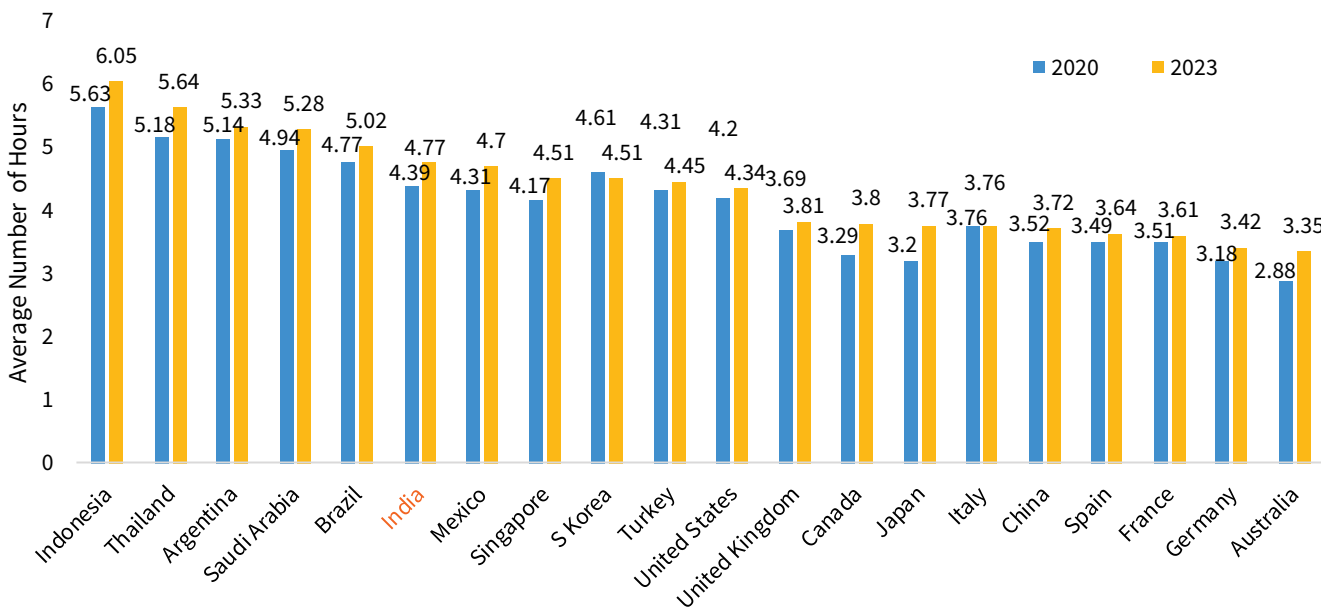


D. AI Preparedness by Country



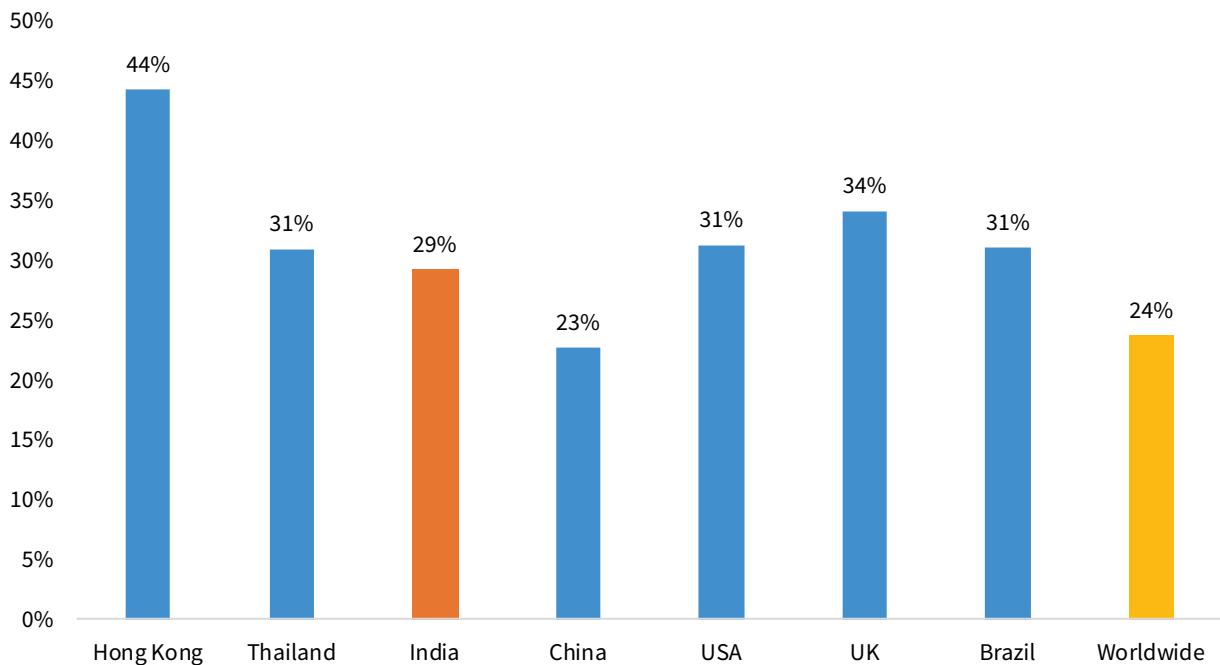
Source: IMF 2024

E. Average Daily Hours Spent on Mobile Per User



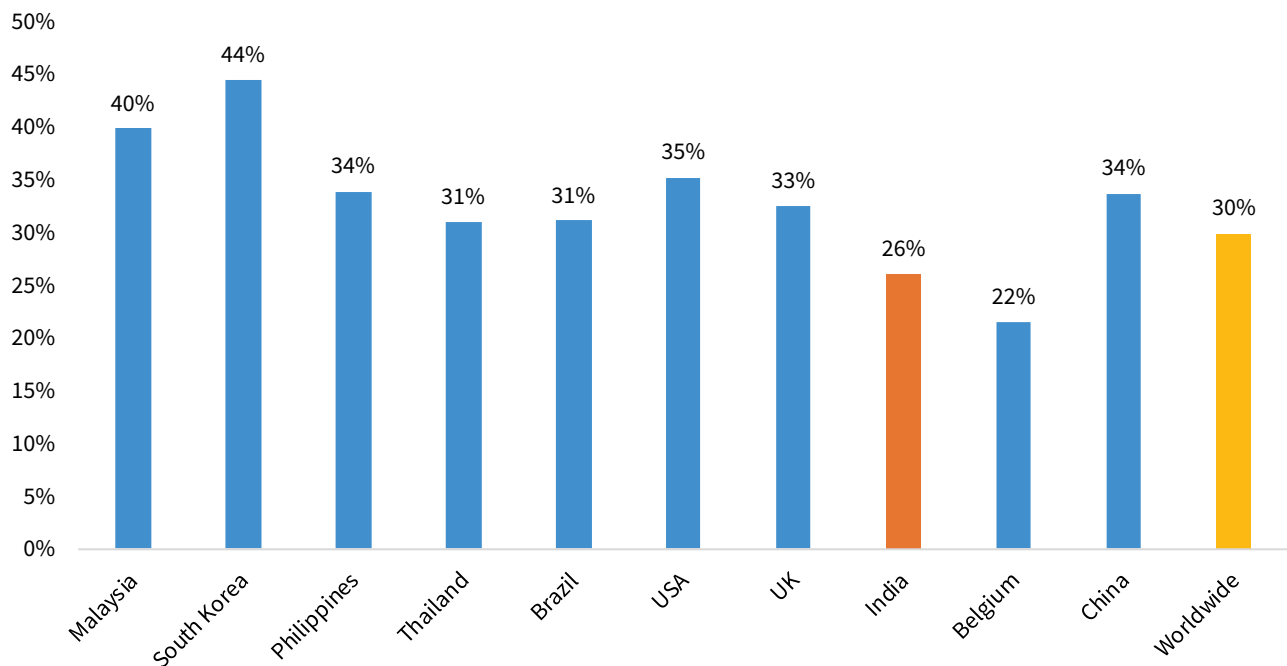
Source: data.ai | STATE OF MOBILE 2024

F. Mobile Payment platform users as % of total Internet users



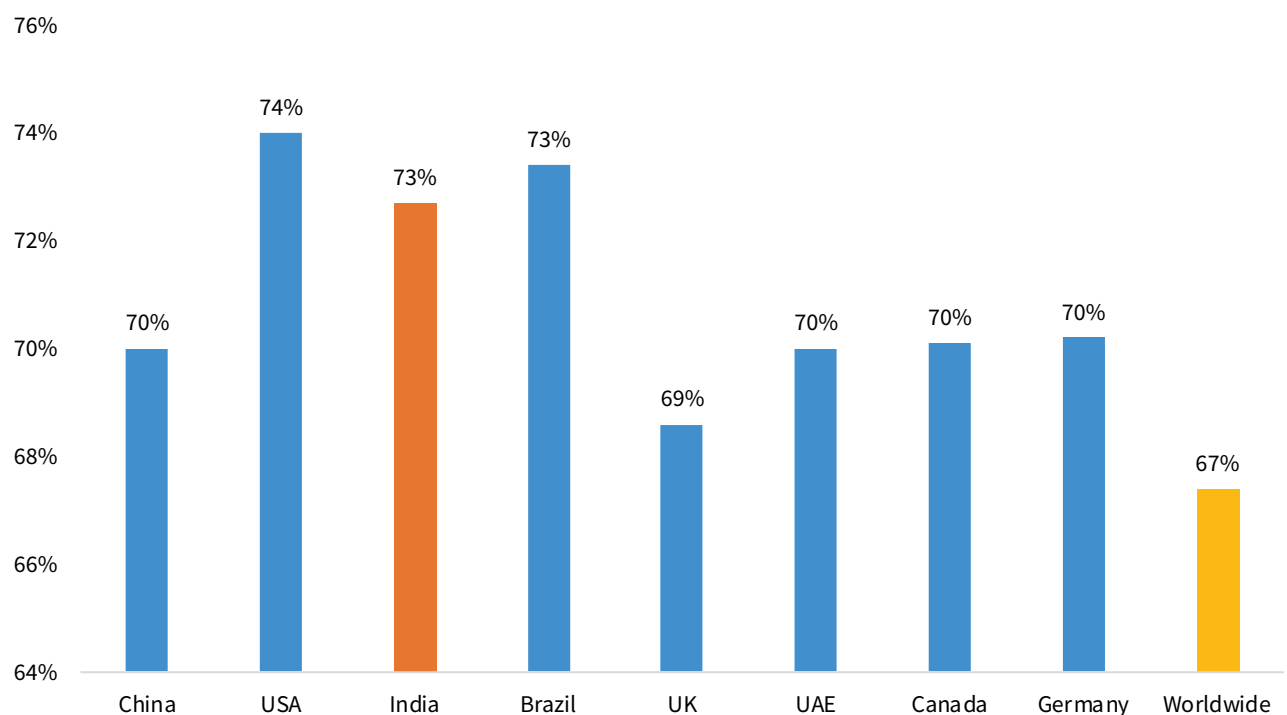
Source: Digital 2024 Global Overview Report

G. Mobile E-commerce purchase via a mobile



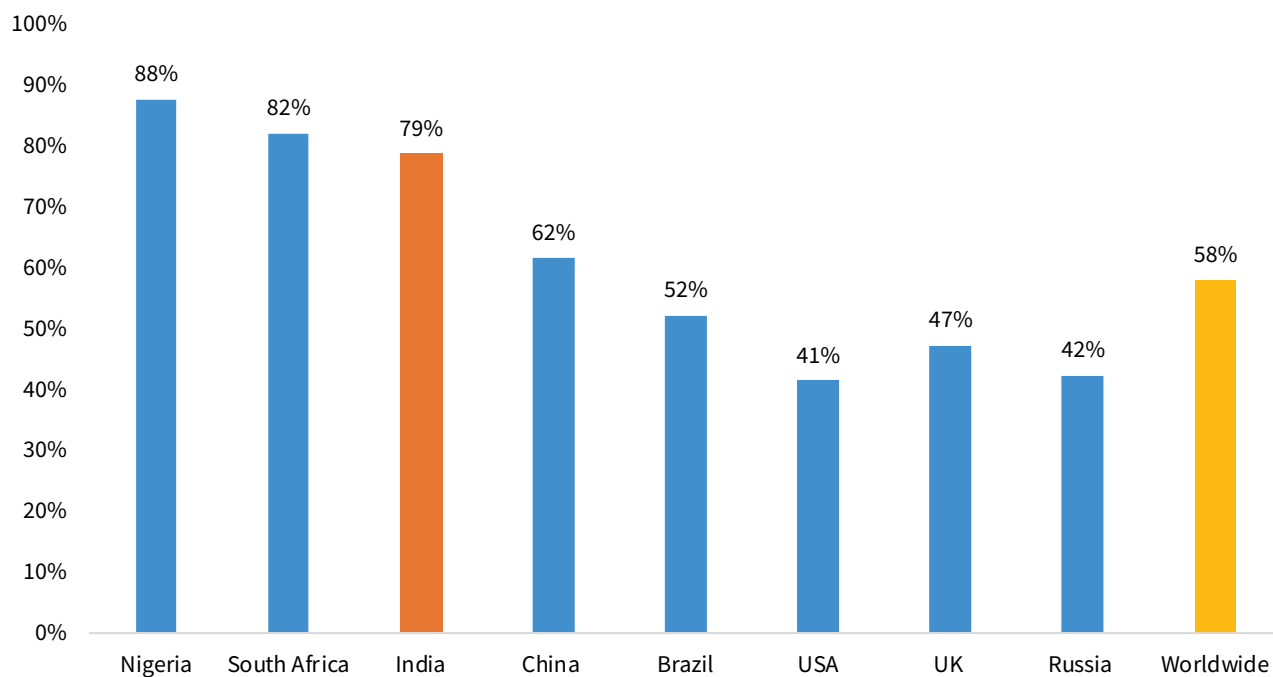
Source: Digital 2024 Global Overview Report

H. % of Internet Users who purchase any type of digital content in a month



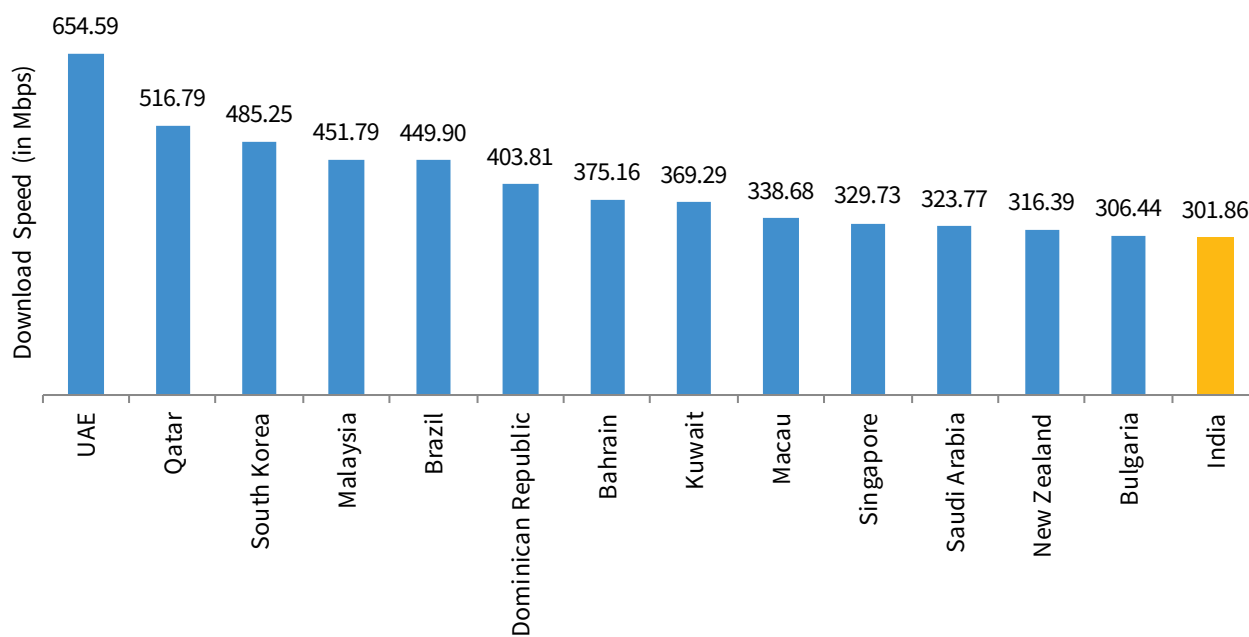
Source: Digital 2024 Global Overview Report

I. Mobile's Share of Web Traffic



Source: Digital 2024 Global Overview Report

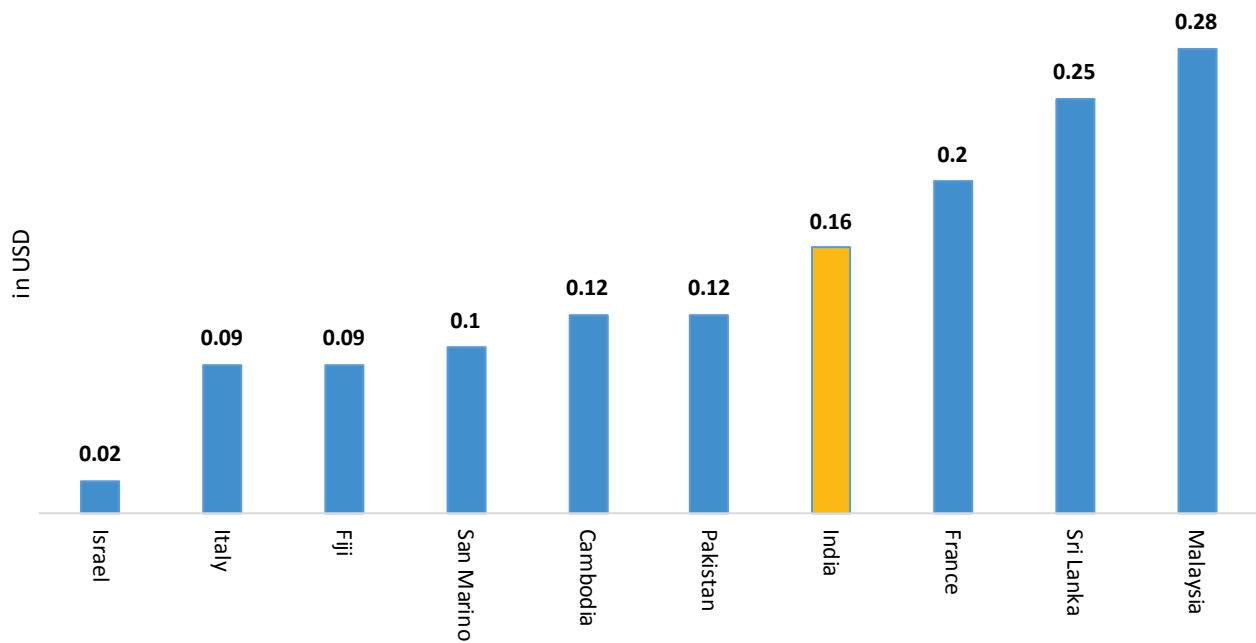
J. 5G Speed Performance



Source: Speedtest Global Index

Note: Data is of March 2024

K. Data Price per GB



Source: Cable.co.uk; Measured during June to Sep 2023





07

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-2024

1. TRAI RECOMMENDATIONS ON “LICENSING FRAMEWORK AND REGULATORY MECHANISM FOR SUBMARINE CABLE LANDING IN INDIA”:

TRAI had issued a Consultation Paper on “Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India” on 23.12.2022. COAI submitted its detailed response to TRAI on 13.02.2023, covering several aspects such as enhancing Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) and providing incentives for setting up of Cable Landing Stations (CLS). The recommendations issued by TRAI on this subject on 19.06.2023, have several positive aspects for setting up CLS in India in line with our submissions and would be overall beneficial to the telecom industry. Some of them are as follows:

- a. TRAI recommendations state that ‘Essential Services’ status be accorded to CLS and Submarine Cables operation and maintenance services. Also, this critical communication infrastructure may be notified as Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) under the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC).
- b. In place of the mandatory presence of DoT Officials on board, DoT may pursue with MoD that survey data be collected under the supervision of MoD and Indian representatives/responsible licensee officials who shall ensure appropriate safeguards.
- c. The crew members in the survey/repair vessel for submarine laying and repair work having valid work permits of

India may be exempted from obtaining clearances repeatedly during the permit period.

- d. Cable Depot should be identified on both the west and east coastline for storing submarine cables and the necessary equipment/kit for carrying out cable repairs. The depot should be situated at a location near to existing or upcoming CLS to facilitate rapid response times to complete cable repairs. Also, these Cable Depots should provide a strategic base for Indian Flagged Vessels in future.

2. VERIFICATION OF POI & POA AUTHENTICITY FROM ISSUING AUTHORITY:

DoT had filed an appeal against the Patna High Court ruling directing service providers to verify ‘Proof of Identity’ and ‘Proof of Address’ authenticity from the issuing authority.

- a. COAI aimed to dispose of this Appeal as it would lead to implementation of stringent KYC criteria for subscriber verification.
- b. The Supreme Court, on 16.02.2024, ruled that the Hon’ble Patna High Court’s para 23 directives in the impugned judgement were superfluous. Therefore, the Court struck aside Para 23 of the Impugned Judgement and allowed the Appeal.

3. AMENDMENT TO THE EXISTING KYC INSTRUCTION FOR M2M CONNECTIONS – RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIVE FEATURES FOR M2M CONNECTIONS:

COAI has been constantly raising concerns with DoT regarding the issues being faced by our

member TSPs in implementing the DoT instructions dated 30.05.2019, for restrictive features for SIMs used only for M2M communication services and related KYC instructions. In this regard, COAI had meetings with DDG (NT) in DoT and raised our concerns, requesting for relaxing the instructions.

DoT agreed to our request and vide its letter dated 21.03.2024, amended the earlier instructions dated 16.05.2018 (which was earlier relaxed vide letter dated 30.05.2019), on the restrictive features for M2M SIMs which shall be replaced as under:

- a. Outgoing/Incoming calls shall be allowed to/from predefined set of maximum four (4) numbers only.
- b. Likewise, outgoing/incoming SMS shall be allowed to/from predefined set of maximum four (4) numbers only.
- c. Data communication shall be allowed on a maximum of One Hundred (100) predefined public IP addresses/URLs with fixed APNs or equivalent technology options by the Licensee.
- d. These restrictions are not applicable to calls made to emergency numbers like police, fire, ambulance, etc.

Through this amendment, TSPs and M2MSPs would benefit in expanding their services to their esteemed customers.

4. **ADOPTION OF INDIAN TELEGRAPH RIGHT OF WAY RULES 2016 BY STATES/UTS:** 100% adoption of the RoW 2016 Rules in the country has been achieved through active engagement with States/UTs at various levels via written submissions, highlighting the issue in State Broadband Committee (SBC) meetings, etc. With continued focus, COAI has been able to engage and pursue 26 States/UTs to adopt the 2022 amendment as well.
5. **MINISTRY OF POWER AMENDMENT TO GREEN ENERGY OPEN ACCESS (GEOA):** COAI's active engagement with the Ministry of Power bore fruit with the progressive amendment

notified on 23.05.2023, whereby 100 kW load aggregation within a division was allowed to offset the same with green energy from the grid. This makes it easier for the telecom industry to become eligible for transition to green energy.

6. **MINISTRY OF POWER ADVISORY TO ALL STATES/UTS ON COMPOSITE BILLING:** Basis specific request from COAI, the Ministry of Power, on 24.05.2023, issued advisory to all States and UTs to facilitate the telecom industry by provisioning Composite Billing, boosting 'Ease of Doing Business' for the industry.
7. **MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD) ONLINE PORTAL:** The Right of Way application processing completely moved online for DGDE, Army and Airforce. COAI worked actively with NBM, DGDE and members for ironing out the issues, thereby supporting the industry through regular monitoring and in getting timely permissions.
8. **MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MORTH) ENHANCED ROW POLICY:** COAI's persistent representations and interactions played a vital part in the Ministry issuing an amendment on 17.04.2023, regarding permission for laying of underground OFC/Telecom cables on National Highways, wherein the charges were reduced. Also, the license fee for OFC crossing the National Highway was made nil.
9. **EMF AWARENESS ACTIVITIES:** COAI has been regularly supporting the EMF awareness events hosted by DoT and its various LSAs, both through hybrid and physical modes. We supported three physical events apart from multiple online events. More than 500 direct connects were made through these engagements.
10. **NETWORK ENHANCEMENT IN AYODHYA:** COAI supported the members in coordination with concerned stakeholders at the center and in the state to achieve timely enhancement of the physical network coverage in the city of Ayodhya.

11. **FACILITATING OF ALIGNMENT IN ROW RELATED CHARGES:** COAI worked continuously with various State/UT governments for alignment of the RoW charges. A key win was the removal of Way Leave Charges (@ INR 200/meter) in the MCD area.
12. **IT (INTERMEDIARY GUIDELINES AND DIGITAL MEDIA ETHICS CODE) RULES, 2021:** COAI has been constantly following up with MIB to highlight that there should be no requirement to separately set up/be members of self-regulating bodies for TSPs, as is the requirement in the case of content of other publishers/OTT platforms in the aforementioned rules. In this regard, a meeting was held with JS, MIB on 03.10.2023, wherein the following points were clarified by MIB:
 - a. TSPs shall not be deemed accountable for the content exhibited on their platform if the content is aggregated from the OTT platforms/News agencies registered with MIB.
 - b. Content being exhibited on the TSPs' platform/s must undergo a thorough process of due diligence.
 - c. TSPs should only include content of those content providers/OTT platforms/News agencies that are registered with the MIB.
 - d. Requirement of SRBs is not a mandate but only an essential requirement.
 - e. No content shall be regulated twice and the TSPs do not need to form/be a part of SRB if the aggregated content originates from the platform/s duly registered with MIB.
 - f. TSPs to refrain from endorsing any content that is deemed obscene or has the potential to provoke religious sentiments in the nation.
13. **SUPPORT FOR ACCEPTANCE OF EVIDENCE OF NODAL OFFICER OF TELECOM COMPANIES UNDER SECTION 65 B OF THE INDIAN EVIDENCE ACT THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCE (VC):** COAI submitted letters on 26.02.2024, 05.05.2022 and 12.12.2022, regarding "Court Appearance and deposing of evidence, U/s 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, by TSP Nodal officers and Alternate Circle Nodal Officers wherein DoT and Punjab and Haryana High Court were requested for support to consider appropriate measures to excuse the requirement of personal appearances by Nodal Officers of TSPs in Court Cases for evidence purposes and allow the same through VC (Video Conference). In this regard, the Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High Court has kindly agreed our request vide its letter dated 20.03.2024.
14. **EXTENSION OF TIMELINE FOR SUBMISSION OF SELF-CERTIFICATES IN UP-GRADATION CASES:** COAI, vide its letters dated 10.01.2024 and 21.03.2024, submitted that there is an urgent need for Extension in the timelines for Submission of EMF Self certificates and abeyance of 5G Site testing. DoT vide its instructions dated 02.04.2024, extended the timeline for submission of self-certificates for new BTSs and upgradation cases to 15.07.2024, where the BTS's first radiation/upgradation is done from the date of allocation of frequencies to the Licensees till 30.06.2024.
15. **REGARDING DISCONTINUATION OF PAPER-BASED KYC PROCESS:** DoT had issued instructions on 05.12.2023, regarding withdrawing Paper based KYC process. COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 19.12.2023, requesting to exempt the said instructions for exceptional cases. Further, DoT vide its order dated 19.03.2024 has agreed for permitting licenses to use paper-based KYC process for these exceptional cases.
16. **6 GHZ BAND FOR IMT:** COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 06.12.2023, highlighting that the successful identification of 6 GHz

band for Region 1 at WRC-23 would, in turn, provide an opportunity to Region 3 countries, including India, to leverage the ecosystem that would be developed. In the WRC-23, the band 7025-7125 MHz has been identified for IMT in all 3 regions. The band 6425-7025 MHz was identified for IMT in Region 1 and for Region 3, the final outcome is a compromised “packaged deal” between the footnote and a common regulatory condition for use of this band and avoiding “further study” for region 3 for WRC-27. This ensures we have an EIRP mask for global use, and no need to revise it for R3 separately.

17. MANDATORY TESTING AND CERTIFICATION OF TELECOM EQUIPMENT (MTCTE):

Representation was made to DoT on 19.12.2023, requesting for additional time to comply with MTCTE. On 27.12.2023, TEC – (i) extended the compliance date for the 12 products notified under Phases III and IV to 01.04.2024, and (ii) re-categorized all the notified products into the GCS and SCS categories and reduced the fees for ER-based applications under MTCTE, effective 01.01.2024. COAI further sought extension for the 12 products from TEC. Based on COAI’s request, TEC extended the date of mandatory testing of 10 products notified under MTCTE phases III and IV by four months i.e., from 01.04.2024 to 01.08.2024. TEC also provided extension on the last date of acceptance to test reports issued by labs accredited by International Laboratory Accredited Cooperation (ILAC) signatories from non-border sharing countries by four months for technical parameters only i.e., 31.03.2024 to 31.07.2024 for 4 products.

18. SC SET ASIDE HC ORDER ON TAXING SIM CARD SALE DISCOUNTS:

The Hon’ble Supreme Court, on 28.02.2024, ruled that telecom companies are not liable to deduct tax at source on income or profit in the payments received for selling discounted pre-paid SIM cards from their distributors. The Supreme Court set aside the Delhi and Calcutta High Courts’ orders and said

that Section 194H of the Income Tax is not applicable to them in this case.

19. EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS FOR VERIFICATION OF DEDUCTIONS CLAIMED FROM GROSS REVENUE FOR Q1’FY 2023-24 (F):

TSPs are required to submit various documents, including Annexure-AO, for the process of verification of deductions, which is required to be mapped with entries in Form 26Q (TDS) as an integral part of our compliance process. Since the Ministry of Finance (CBDT) had extended the deadline for the submission of the statement of deduction of tax for the first quarter of FY 2023-24 (as required to be furnished in Form No. 26Q) to 30.09.2023, from the earlier due date of 31.07.2023, Form 26Q was not available and hence, members were unable to submit the required documents within the originally specified time frame.

Apropos the representations made by COAI, DoT, on 06.10.2023, extended the timeline till 31.10.2023. The extension granted by DoT helped the Members in ensuing compliances.

20. CLARIFICATION(S) REGARDING ACTIVITIES RELATING TO CABLE REPAIR/ INSTALLATION OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT IN EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES (EEZ):

Telecom companies depend heavily on submarine cables for the high-speed transfer of data around the globe. The customs duty exemption granted to vessels engaged in laying submarine cables in India was set to expire on 31.03.2024. COAI requested the government to extend this exemption to prevent a substantial increase in the costs associated with cable laying, which could adversely affect the future deployment of submarine cables, potentially compromising the quality of service provided to customers.

Vide notification no. 06-2024, the validity of exemptions which was lapsing on 31.03.2024, was extended up to 30.09.2024, helping in ease of doing compliances.



1. COAI Report on ‘Socio-economic benefits of the 6 GHz Band: Approaches On Licensed And Unlicensed Spectrum Allocations’

The report, based on quantitative analysis, surveys, academic articles and other relevant sources, provides an understanding of the socio-economic benefits of utilising the 6 GHz band spectrum for providing robust mobile communications services in India, while also highlighting potential challenges and risks its allocation, including interference issues, technological constraints, regulatory capacity, market concentration, the potential exacerbation of the digital divide and security risks.

2. COAI White Paper on ‘Addressing Rising Data Traffic and Associated Infrastructure Costs in Indian Telecom’

The White Paper adopts a practical approach using statistics and mathematics to logically derive the increasing impact of the disproportionate traffic generated by Large Traffic Generating (LTG) platforms/applications and the need for responsible sharing of infrastructure development, maintenance and upgradation costs by them. Highlights:

- a. The analysis in the White Paper leads to five models of resolution to the issue, with the final recommended model 5 emerging as the one protecting the interests of the Startups and MSMEs while bridging the deficit to the best possible extent. It also puts to rest all alleged concerns related to net neutrality, double charging, dubious proposal to increase consumer tariffs, etc.

- b. The additional financial analysis based on the White Paper brings out the potential loss of approx. INR 800 crores to the Government exchequer in the absence of responsible cost sharing by LTGs, expected to increase further if not addressed in time.

3. TRAI Consultation Paper on Definition of International Traffic

TRAI had issued this consultation paper on 02.05.2023 and an Open House Discussion was held on 24.08.2023. COAI submitted its response to the Consultation Paper on 11.07.2023, wherein it was stated that the actual need is not to define what international traffic is, but to clarify that SMS originated from International servers/entities and masqueraded as domestic SMS by introducing a proxy server in India (just like it was in the case of grey voice calls), would classify as International message as per existing licensing norms. There is no ambiguity regarding the treatment of international traffic or what constitutes international traffic and a robust licensing and regulatory framework exists in India for decades, on the basis of which grey voice calls have been dealt with legally for years now.

4. TRAI Consultation Paper on Regulatory Mechanism for Over-The-Top (OTT) Communication and Selective Banning of OTT Service

TRAI had issued this consultation paper on 07.07.2023. COAI submitted its inputs on 01.09.2023, wherein we stated that there is a need to accurately and comprehensively define OTT services, which would further

enunciate and bring about the required clarity. OTT Service providers should be brought under the Regulatory Framework, pay a Fair Share Charge to TSPs and be liable to selective banning under the necessary regulation.

5. **TRAI Consultation Paper on Review of Quality-of-Service Standards for Access Services (Wireless and Wireline) and Broadband (Wireless and Wireline) Services**

TRAI issued this consultation paper on 18.08.2023. COAI submitted its response on 14.12.2023, stating that TRAI should thoroughly assess the current state of networks, including their constraints, both within and beyond the operators' control, before establishing any parameter or benchmark. It is imperative to identify and address these obstacles proactively.

We further submitted that:

- In the short term, the Authority may consider moving towards a light touch regulatory framework for QoS, i.e., only limited parameters should be measured and reported on a quarterly basis.
- In the long-term, the Authority should deregulate the QoS parameters while maintaining the oversight through drive tests and/or (a mix of) drive tests and 3rd party surveys.

6. **TRAI Consultation Paper on Digital Inclusion in the Era of Emerging Technologies**

TRAI issued this consultation paper on 14.09.2023. On 29.12.2023, COAI submitted its response, wherein the stellar role of TSPs in enhancing Digital inclusion was highlighted. We submitted that by abolishing the USOF levy, TSPs would be incentivized to further expand and deepen their network, including 5G services in underutilized and far-flung areas of the country, thereby contributing expansively to improving tele-density and hence digital inclusion. The abolition of levying USOF will also strengthen the cash flow of the TSPs, enabling them to further

invest and contribute to enhance Digital Inclusion in the country. It was also stated that there were sufficient parameters to determine the progress of Digital Inclusion in the country.

7. **TRAI Consultation Paper on “Connectivity to Access Service VNOs from more than one NSO”**

TRAI had issued this consultation paper on 23.12.2024. COAI submitted its response on 22.03.2023, stating that UL(VNO) licensee/s are already permitted to get connectivity from different wireline NSOs at different EPABX level and there is no need to further liberalize this regime. Therefore, UL(VNO) licensee should not be permitted to take connectivity with more than one NSO in a LSA for providing wireline access service. It was further submitted that UL(VNO) licensee/s holding Access Service Authorisation in an LSA should not be permitted to take connectivity from more than one NSO for providing wireless access service and other NSO(s) for wireline access service in the LSA.

8. **TRAI Consultation Paper on “Digital Transformation through 5G Ecosystem”**

TRAI has issued this consultation paper on 29.09.2023. COAI submitted its response on 08.02.2024, wherein it was submitted that despite the fact that the 5G services will play the most crucial role in driving digital transformation across various industries, there are still challenges related to the monetisation of the 5G services. Some of the challenges shared w.r.t. Digital Transformation through the 5G Ecosystem are related to the policy & regulatory restrictions w.r.t. M2M Services; Challenges in the implementation of RoW Rules by the State Government/s, Municipalities, Central Government agencies, etc. and high RoW charges being levied for the deployment of fiber; regulation related to Network slicing; current EMF exposure limits in India being significantly stricter (10 times) than the ICNIRP norms, among others.

9. TRAI Consultation Paper on “Open and De-licensed use of Unused or Limited Used Spectrum Bands for Demand Generation for Limited Period in Tera Hertz Range”

TRAI had issued this consultation paper on 27.09.2023. COAI, in its response dated 29.11.2023, submitted that no part of any of the spectrum bands should be considered for delicensing. Further, the Experimental and Technology trial licenses and Demonstration licenses prescribed by DoT in 2019 are sufficient for such requirements, even for the Tera Hertz frequencies. Also, there is no need for separate experimental license for any frequency band, including THz bands.

10. TRAI Consultation Paper on “Encouraging R&D in Telecom, Broadcasting and IT (ICT) Sectors”

This consultation paper was issued by TRAI on 22.09.2023. COAI, in its response submitted on 24.01.2024, mentioned that India has come a long way in terms of investment in R&D since its independence in 1947, and also mentioned about various challenges in the education system, areas for improvement and additional measures.

11. TRAI Consultation Paper on “Encouraging Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Communication Sector”

This consultation paper was issued by TRAI on 19.06.2023. COAI submitted its response on 02.08.2023, mentioning that there is no need for Regulatory Sandbox for TSP owned products & services and no need for prescribing a framework for TSP controlled Regulatory Sandbox, as TSPs are already required to comply with the license conditions. Further, we submitted that any licensed Service Provider under UL shall be eligible for setting up the Regulatory Sandbox, which should be operated only by Licensed Service Providers (LSPs) or jointly by LSPs and other entities. It was also submitted that licensed TSPs will set up and operationalize

the Regulatory Sandbox, thus, there should not be any need for excessive monitoring or regulatory compliances.

12. Review of the definition of AGR

COAI made submissions to DoT and TRAI on 17.04.2023, suggesting that the definition of AGR is still complex and needs to be reviewed and simplified. A follow-up letter was submitted to DoT and TRAI on the review of the definition of AGR on 15.06.2023. Further, a letter was submitted to DoT on 09.10.2023, responding to the Clarifications issued by DoT on 17.07.2023. We requested DoT to re-evaluate the issues presented by us in a holistic manner, as well as suggested for initiating a comprehensive Consultation process on the matters surrounding AGR.

13. Abolishment of Performance and Financial Bank Guarantees (BG)

COAI submitted a letter on the issue of BGs to DoT on 31.05.2023, requesting for abolishment of PBGs and FBGs.

The TRAI recommendations on ‘Rationalization of Entry Fee and Bank Guarantees’ issued on 19.09.2023, included a reduction in the Entry fee by 50%. However, TRAI did not reduce the Bank Guarantees, but merged PBG and FBG instead.

TRAI did not accept our submission of doing away with the Bank Guarantees. We had submitted that the practice of asking Bank Guarantee has outlived its utility and the funds which were meant for the same to be channelised effectively in networks and services.

We had stated that the imposition of the Bank Guarantee has been a hindrance to the service providers’ infusion of investments in the sector. We also submitted that the present players in the telecom sector are amongst the biggest and most reputed business houses of India, who have a long-term commitment towards the fulfilment of the Digital India vision. We had stated that the practice of the Bank Guarantees (both PBG and FBG) for

existing Licenses/Authorizations should be done away with.

14. Relaxation of the mandatory requirement of DoT representatives during survey of submarine cable routes

A letter to DoT regarding the “Relaxation of mandatory requirement of DoT representatives to be present during the survey of submarine cable routes conducted by TSPs” was submitted on 07.06.2023. A follow-up letter was also sent on 06.11.2023, reiterating the need to re-evaluate the necessity of mandating the physical presence of DoT officials during submarine cable route surveys.

15. Simplification of verification process for deduction from GR for Access Services

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 18.08.2023, requesting that deductions for Access Services be permitted based on audit certificates, following the same approach as NLD and ILD services. However, in case DoT still believes that the same is not feasible, the sample base verification process as per the TRAI Recommendations on EoDB dated 02.05.2023, may be considered.

16. Conducting of “Consumer Education Workshops (CEWs)” via digital/online mode

A letter was submitted to TRAI on 07.08.2023, requesting to continue to allow TSPs to conduct at least 50% of the CEWs via online mode and extend the same for one year i.e., till 30.09.2024.

Vide its letter dated 11.09.2023, TRAI stated that TSPs can organize the workshops through hybrid mode as per the feasibility for online participation of consumers. Further, TRAI has desired that CEWs should be organized for specific targets such as students, women entrepreneurs, farm produce organizations, fisheries, etc. to update them on new technologies and their possible use cases, including safeguard measures.

17. Immediate Identification of Critical Services in M2M

COAI wrote to DoT on 19.10.2023 and 15.01.2024, asking for the immediate identification of Critical services in M2M sector and to include RF Mesh service providers under the ambit of UL. We submitted that the absence of such identification will lead to Security-related issues and cause huge losses to the National Exchequer, besides creating potential complexity of retrospective regulatory compliance.

18. Bringing RF Mesh under UL

Follow-up letters were written to DoT on 19.09.2023 and 18.10.2023, reiterating COAI’s stance on the need to immediately include RF Mesh service providers under the ambit of M2M authorization and bringing it under Unified License.

19. Relaxation of restrictive features of M2M services.

Via a letter to DoT on 15.05.2023, COAI shared the challenges in the implementation of the restrictive clauses for M2M Services in detail, including global best practices.

We recommended the following to DoT:

- Permitting multiple IP/URLs should be enabled for the IoT customers to effectively build, deploy and scale their solutions for the foreseeable future.
- To safeguard against possible misuse of the SIM card, DoT may clarify that such restrictions have to be mandatorily implemented within the core network of the telecom service provider.
- Clarify that the need to ensure restricted data access is not applicable to communications taking place on private networks, in the amended Guidelines.
- Clarify on the clause of restriction of voice and SMS prescribed in the M2M guidelines.

20. Letter to DoT excluding Revenue earned from other licensed TSPs for sharing/leasing infrastructure from AGR.

COAI sent a letter on 09.11.2023, requesting DoT to accept the recommendations issued by TRAI on “Use of street furniture for Small Cell and Aerial Fiber Deployment”, “Improving Telecom Infrastructure in Northeastern States of India”, “Improving Backhaul Telecom Infrastructure in far-flung areas of Himachal Pradesh” and “Revenue earned from other licensed TSPs from sharing/leasing of infrastructure”, be inserted under the existing license condition named as “List of other income to be excluded from GR to arrive at ApGR” for levy of Licence Fee.

21. Simplification of Spectrum Usage Charges

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 03.11.2023, requesting to consider our proposal to implement a simplified SUC assessment mechanism, which would benefit all stakeholders involved and contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the telecom sector.

22. Abolition of USOF levies

COAI submitted letters to both DoT and MoF regarding the abolition of USOF levies on 24.11.2023, citing examples of 45 countries and comparing the rates of similar fees levied by them. We requested that:

- USO levy be abolished.
- If that is not possible immediately, the current levy be reduced to 1% from the present 5%.
- If that too is difficult, then the current USOF Fund balance should be utilised first and until then, collection of USO levy from TSPs should be stopped. Post exhaustion of funds, if rural connectivity is still an issue in any area, then such levy should be decided annually basis the funds required for a particular year.

23. Reduction in Regulatory Levies – License Fee Contribution

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 28.08.2023, reiterating our earlier submissions requesting the reduction of LF from 3% to 1% of the AGR. We shared examples of 25 countries with comparative License Fee levies applicable to the Telecom Service Providers in the respective countries.

24. Temporary Suspension of Internet Services

COAI wrote to DoT on 19.01.2024, to urgently provide appropriate instructions and guidelines to State Governments to discourage the issuance of orders for temporary internet service suspensions without any genuine emergency/law & order issue.

25. Advocacy for Telecom Infrastructure

- On Right of Way:** During the year, submissions were made to the States and UTs on adoption of Indian Telegraph RoW 2022 and RoW 2023 amendment rules. These submissions highlighted the need for bringing out a facilitative environment for telecom infrastructure deployment, especially for 5G rollout.
- On Electricity:** COAI made submissions to the States and UTs, asking for (a) Industrial Tariff, (b) Adoption of Composite Billing and (c) Implementing Green Energy Open Access amendment facilitating the telecom industry. The State of Himachal Pradesh extended the industrial tariff to telecom, the second state to do so after Maharashtra. COAI also filed appeals against Tariff finalization of 6 states, demanding Industrial category electricity tariff. This ask of Industrial Electricity tariff categorization for telecom was also made to DoT.

26. Submission for support on various industry issues related to Right of Way and facilitating Telecom infrastructure deployment

COAI made 384 submissions to States, UTs, Central Ministries, DoT and local governing

bodies to take up industry concerns. This included submissions related to RoW rules adoption, Electricity related facilitations, inclusion of Telecom in State's IT/ITeS policy, etc. Similarly, COAI participated in 51 State Broadband Committee meetings, bringing out members' concerns and highlighting respective geographies' issues with seniormost level officers of the State and UT administrations.

27. Engagement with Central Ministries

- a. COAI actively participated along with key stakeholders for working with the Central Electricity Authority, Ministry of Power towards preparation of Model RFP document for leasing of dark fiber of State Electricity Transmission network.
- b. Engagement was done with the Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region for raising awareness on the TRAI recommendations on 'Improving Telecom Infrastructure in Northeastern States of India'.

28. Relaxation for Telecom industry on use of Diesel Generator (DG) sets by CAQM

COAI spearheaded the industry concern related to the new norms on use of DG sets set by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR. Multiple submissions were made and meetings were held with CAQM, DoT and TRAI, resulting in relaxation on compliance for the industry by extending the timelines.

29. Engagement with Noida International Airport (NIA) on the upcoming new airport

COAI made submissions and held regular meetings with the NIA representatives and members, including field visit, for lowering the height of the telecom tower masts around the upcoming new international airport at Jewar.

30. Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

COAI made a representation to MeitY on 20.10.2023, with respect to the transition to

the new regime of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. We further brought out a brief enumeration of some of the requirements of the DPDP Act, 2023, identified by COAI members as having challenges.

31. TEC "Standard for Assessing and Rating Robustness of Artificial Intelligence Systems in Telecom Networks and Digital Infrastructure"

TEC had issued a Questionnaire on Standard for Assessing and Rating Robustness of Artificial Intelligence Systems in Telecom Networks and Digital Infrastructure on 18.10.2023. COAI had submitted its response on 15.12.2023, mentioning that the concept of AI and its use across various sectors of economies, including Telecommunications, is still emerging and there is no need to create additional standards specifically for low-risk, high-value AI applications utilized by TSPs or any specific standards for TSPs at this stage. Further, it was recommended that TEC holds detailed consultations with TSPs for discussing about Standards for Assessing and Rating Robustness of Artificial Intelligence Systems in Telecom Networks and Digital Infrastructure before prescribing any such specification.

32. COAI Submission on 6 GHz band spectrum

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 06.12.2023, requesting for successful identification of the 6 GHz band for Region 1 at WRC-23 without undue conditions blocking affordable macro deployments. The World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) opened up 100 MHz of spectrum in the 6 GHz band for IMT services across the world, including India. This development is vital for the Indian telecom operators as they have a limited amount of frequencies in the 3.3-3.67 GHz band range.

33. Safety measures regarding C band radio-altimeter vs. 5G/IMT base stations

COAI submitted a letter to the Ministry of Civil Aviation on 04.09.2023, requesting:

- a. To mandate all airline carriers operating in Indian territorial boundaries to replace nonconforming Radio Altimeters.
- b. To mandate completion of replacement of non-conforming Radio Altimeters in progressive manner within 18 months, starting 01.09.2023.
- c. To mandate a monitoring dashboard to observe the progress of replacement of non-conforming Radio Altimeters to be made available on public domain.
- d. To mandate that after completion of deadline, all buffer related restrictions across all airports/airstrips should not be enforceable.

34. Allowing digital display of Information related to Specific Absorption Rate value and safety precautions in the Manufacturer's mobile handset booklet

An email was received from DoT on 22.08.2023, with respect to - Allowing digital display of Information related to Specific Absorption Rate value and safety precautions in the Manufacturer's mobile handset booklet as per D/o Telecommunications OMs issued on 25.01.2012 and 17.08.2012. COAI submitted a letter to DoT welcoming the initiative and requested to extend a similar regulatory allowance for permitting the Manufacturer's mobile handset booklet to be made available online or through QR Code/e-label.

35. DoT instructions dated 31.08.2023, on Provisioning of telecom services by Licensees through Franchisee, Agents and Distributors {Point of Sale (PoS)}

DoT had issued Instructions for Provisioning of telecommunication services by Licensees through Franchisee, Agents, and Distributors {Point of Sale (PoS)} on 31.08.2023. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 22.09.2023, highlighting some practical challenges in the implementation of the said instructions.

36. Amendment/addendum to existing instructions issued for adequate verification of customers and other subscriber verification related matter.

DoT issued Amendment/addendum to existing instructions for adequate verification of customers and other subscriber verification related matters on 31.08.2023. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 22.09.2023 highlighting certain challenges and sought clarifications.

37. Draft technical report on "Television Broadcasting to Mobile Handheld Devices - Direct to Mobile (D2M) Broadcasting"

COAI submitted its inputs to the TEC Draft technical report on "Television Broadcasting to Mobile Handheld Devices - Direct to Mobile (D2M) Broadcasting" on 01.02.2024.

38. Review of the current Indian EMF Norms and Testing Methodology in line with WHO Recommended ICNIRP 2020 guidelines.

COAI, in a letter to DoT on 29.09.2023, highlighted the need for aligning India's EMF threshold requirements with WHO recommended and internationally recognized ICNIRP 2020 levels. Further letters were submitted to DoT on 10.01.2024 and 13.02.2024, and a meeting was also held on 15.02.2024, wherein the issue was discussed.

39. Draft Document for Revision of the "TEC Standard for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna (TEC 13019:2021)"

COAI submitted inputs to the TEC issued Draft Document for Revision of the "TEC Standard for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna (TEC 13019:2021)". COAI submitted that the current EMF Limits are under revision by DoT basis IMC recommendation. Hence, till the time the outcome of EMF limits revision comes out, the current EMF limits/table should be removed from the draft, EIRP should be changed to actual EIRP from max EIRP, Frequency Selective measurements should be

performed only if Broadband measurement results surpass 100% prescribed limits, and all the non EMF related parameters should be removed from EMF Self Certification compliance for sites.

40. Consultative Committee for adoption of TSDSI adopted ATSC 3.0 standard into National Standard by TEC

A Consultative Committee (CC) has been constituted by TEC for the purpose of adoption of TSDSI adopted ATSC 3.0 standards into national standards. In this regard, COAI submitted its initial response to TEC on 26.10.2023. Four meetings of the committee were held, with the last meeting being held on 20.12.2023, wherein COAI highlighted the issues pertaining to ATSC 3.0. Based on the inputs, the Consultative Committee recommended that the proposal for adoption of standards may be sent back to TSDSI as per the Standardization Guide for amendment/possible resolution of the issues highlighted by the Committee.

41. Representation to NSCS on CPE's availability in market

COAI made a representation to NSCS on 17.07.2023, requesting that the requirement for TSPs to seek approvals from the NSCS for the various products be done away with through appropriate directions.

42. IP Messaging

COAI submitted letters to DoT and TRAI on 06.06.2023 and 09.08.2023 respectively, highlighting that IP messages being sent by Handset Manufactures/OEMs (which are being masqueraded and shown as SMS to end consumers) fall under the definition of licenced services which can be provided only under Unified License, and therefore, it is illegal to do so without obtaining proper authorization under Unified License.

43. Challenges in activation of SIM for foreign nationals

In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT with the following requests:

- a. Activation of SIM for foreign nationals (with all VISA types) without the requirement of OTP using alternate number.
- b. Activation of SIM for citizens of neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, etc. without requirement of valid VISA.

44. Sudden change in the e-KYC 2.5 API Specifications

An email was received from UIDAI by our member TSPs on 16.11.2023, intimating about changes introduced in the e-KYC 2.5 API Specifications. COAI submitted a letter to DoT requesting for guidance in asking UIDAI to keep the member TSPs on an exception list for both production and pre-production environment.

45. Online submission of subscriber database to a society registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860 namely C-DOT

Member TSPs of COAI received instructions from ADG (AI & DIU), DoT vide mail dated 04.12.2023, to establish direct connectivity with C-DOT for online submission of subscriber database, which includes all demographic and personal details. COAI requested DoT via a letter sent on 14.12.2023, to review and withdraw the instructions by the AI & DIU Unit to share such sensitive personal data of subscribers with any third party such as C-DOT.

46. Regarding Discontinuation of Paper-based KYC process

DoT issued instructions on 05.12.2023, on withdrawing the Paper based KYC process. COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 19.12.2023, requesting to exempt the said instructions for certain scenarios.

47. Request for reconsideration on obtaining Affidavits from PoS

DoT had issued instructions on PoS dated 31.08.2023, mandating to obtain an affidavit

from PoS in case, franchisee/agents/point of sale does not have - (a) CIN/LLPIN/Business license/Incorporation certificate; (b) PAN of the authorised signatory or person who is entering into agreement with the licensee; (c) GST registration Certificate, and will submit these documents whenever they become available. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 09.02.2024, requesting that the unwarranted, practically difficult and legally questionable requirement to obtain affidavits be reconsidered and be replaced with undertaking.

48. Request to reconsider the training and certification of Auth. Agents for telecom operators

UIDAI had sent a letter to TSPs, specifying the requirement of all authentication operators to undergo training, testing and certification. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to UIDAI on 19.02.2024, requesting to reconsider the proposed training and certification program for the retailers/agents of TSPs.

49. Police verification of Point of Sale (PoS) in J&K, Assam and North East Service Areas

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 11.03.2024, basis the DoT circular dated 31.08.2023, para 9 of which mentions "...However, in case of J&K, Assam and North East LSAs, existing guidelines of police verification shall be followed before signing the written agreement with PoS(s)". In this regard, we requested DoT:

- a. To kindly take the citizen centric process "Assam Police Seva Setu" in Assam on record for onboarding PoS in the Assam LSA.
- b. To allow the process being adopted in Assam LSA for onboarding PoS to be replicated in UTs and States falling in J&K and North East LSAs respectively.
- c. To allow the TSPs to obtain PVR directly from the respective State Police Department, which is already operational in the North East LSA.

50. Requirement of reporting POS details on NCRP Portal

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), MHA requested the TSPs to provide the POS details of the numbers reported on NCRP Portal vide its email dated 11.03.2024. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to MHA on 19.03.2024, requesting that the DoT, the designated LEAs and TSPs may be involved for formulating a methodology for capturing PoS details only for prospective cases and till such time, this requirement may be kept in abeyance.

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

COAI provided its inputs and comments to the AI 1.13 proposal concerning the National Working Party-4C Satellite Issues (MSS & RDSS) on 19.03.2024. COAI highlighted that the frequency spectrum allocated for IMT services in India is used for wide coverage by terrestrial services; and hence does not need complementary service from coverage from satellites.

52. Background behind live photo of customer in DKYC CAF

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 20.03.2024, requesting that in the case of CAFs where live photo of the customer is identifiable and where no other person has come in the frame, it should not be treated as non-compliant during CAF audits, even if the white background behind the live photo of the customer is with certain variations in terms of textures or slightly off-white shades or slightly tinted white, etc.

53. Utilization of 6 GHz Frequency Band in IMT/5G for national benefit

COAI, via a letter to DoT on 10.08.2023, highlighted the critical need for optimal and judicious utilization of the valuable natural resource of spectrum available in the highly potent 6 GHz band, while also debunking some misleading views and misplaced

observations from a consumer survey propagated in media.

54. Rising cases of pesky/fraudulent calls over Communication OTT platforms

COAI submitted letters to TRAI and DoT on 12.05.2023, highlighting the noticeable increase in pesky/fraudulent calls over OTT platforms and the possible vulnerability that this may pose for national security, besides the concerns related to safety of citizens.

55. Misdirected submission to TRAI on OTT Regulation based on false pretence

COAI wrote to TRAI on 04.10.2023, exposing the false pretence and misguiding preamble used to gain support and submit a letter to the Regulator cautioning against any move to over-regulate OTT services in the country. The false statements and

56. Representation to Finance Ministry on GST issues

COAI made a representation to the Finance Ministry of India on the following three GST issues:

- a. Denial of ITC on telecom equipment and accessories installed on towers.
- b. Demand of GST on the entire bid amount for spectrum allocation
- c. Denial of credits on ducts and manholes used in network of optical fiber cables (OFCs).

COAI conveyed that blocking of credit on towers itself is not justifiable, as towers are often moveable and are key inputs in telecom networks. The basis for denial of credit on telecom equipment installed on towers by expanding the ambit of the blocking provision rests on even more weak and flimsy grounds. On an average, spectrum, telecom towers, network equipment and OFCs constitute more than 50% of the ITC at the industry level. It is greatly concerning that all these four key inputs and input services are being

pushed into the throes of legal uncertainty and unwarranted litigation with huge stakes, merely due to arbitrary interpretations adopted by some state GST authorities in their bids to garner additional revenues. COAI also requested the Government that each of these issues be deliberated in the GST Law Committee of the Council and appropriate clarity be provided by way of issuance of circulars/clarifications that are binding on all states, so that the industry receives the due tax certainty and is spared of the unwarranted enquiries and litigation.

57. GST – Time of Supply in case of payment of spectrum

As per well-established practice, DoT had assigned the right to spectrum to various TSPs for a period of 20 years on 05.08.2022 and provided the option to either pay the entire bid amount upfront or over the period for which it is allotted in instalments (wherein the price includes interest as well). The TSPs opted to make the payment in 20 equal instalments and accordingly paid the first instalment in August 2022, together with applicable GST on Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM) basis. However, GST authorities in the State of Punjab issued letters to all the TSPs questioning why GST should not be paid on the entire bid amount payable, irrespective of the payment option adopted by them. COAI engaged with DoT as well as the Punjab Government in this regard, highlighting that the same issue was also there in the Service Tax regime and to avoid multiple interpretations, the Board, vide Circular No. 192/02/2016 Service Tax dated 13.04.2016, clarified the provisions in law and stated that if the assignee (telecom operators) opts for part upfront and the remainder under deferred payment option, then the Service Tax would be payable as and when the instalment payments are due or made, whichever is earlier. As the provision with respect to applicability of tax on reverse charge under Service Tax were alike to those under GST, the clarificatory elements of this circular

should apply equally in the GST regime. COAI has further requested the government for providing support and clarity on the issue

58. Input Tax Credit on equipment installed on telecom towers

Some State Tax Authorities are proposing to deny Input Tax Credit (ITC) on telecom equipment including antenna, base stations, transmitters and other items like DG sets and batteries installed on towers, by interpreting that such equipment is to be treated at par with telecom towers. Few state authorities have even started questioning regarding ITC on optical fibre cable. COAI made various representations and follow ups with DoT, TRAI and MoF. Both TRAI and DoT have sent their recommendations to the Revenue Secretary on the same. The matter is pending with GST Council for consideration.

59. Representation to CBIC on denial of ITC of OFCs, Ducts and Manholes

Some State GST departments and even some of the Central units are proposing to deny ITC on elements of OFC network including the OFCs, the ducts and the manholes, on the grounds that these being embedded in earth, are immovable in nature and hence, ITC is blocked under section 17(5). Consequently, the authorities are also disallowing the ITC on services availed for laying of OFC, ducts and manholes. COAI has requested the Government that the matter be examined and appropriate clarification be issued so that the telecom sector is not subject to unwarranted litigations of high value.

60. Circular with regard to Telecom Equipment and Customs Duty

CBIC, MoF issued a circular 08/2023 dated 13.03.2023, regarding telecommunication equipment in the context of notification No. 02/2019-Customs dated 29.01.2019, amending notification No. 57/2017-Customs dated 30.06.2017. There are significant concerns related to this circular as it will inadvertently impact the pace of the roll-out of the 5G services in the country and also adversely

impact ease of doing business. Further, the mapping of equipment with the description of the Notification in the circular had not been made basis the technical specification, primary function and commercial marketability of the products. Moreover, the earlier amendments were deliberated with concerned stakeholders, and they set their business roadmaps accordingly. In this regard, COAI has requested the following from MoF/DoT:

- a. CBIC to hold consultations with various stakeholders.
- b. CBIC to extend this compliance requirement by min. six months.
- c. Customs Duties for 4G/5G related network products along with other related products be brought down to NIL.

61. Basic Customs Duty Exemption to Submarine Cable Laying/repairing ships

Prior to introduction of the GST regime, the import of cable laying ships were exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD) in terms of Sr. No. 466 of Notification No. 12/2012-Cus., dated 17.03.2012, and continued to be exempted under Sr. No. 555 of Notification No. 50/2017-Cus., dated 30.06.2017, even after the introduction of GST w.e.f. 01.07.2017. However, CBIC amended the said notification on 01.02.2023, vide Notification No. 2/2023-Cus. and accordingly, BCD exemption on cable laying/repair ship was applicable till 31.03.2024. COAI requested the Ministry to reconsider its decision to withdraw the exemption vide the earlier notification dated 30.06.2017, and also suggested that the Ministry works with other GoI entities to streamline the regulatory and customs regimes applicable to the submarine cable industry, to facilitate submarine cables activities and the associated investments therein.

62. GST issues plaguing telecom sector

Additional representation is being made by COAI to DoT highlighting a few key issues

which have potentially disrupted the entire credit chain in the sector and would have an adverse impact on the telecom Industry and the national economy if not clarified at this stage. COAI has requested support from DoT in making recommendations to the GST Council on these key issues:

- a. Denial of ITC on telecom equipment and accessories installed on towers constitutes a very significant portion of the total input cost; sufficient to deform the entire cost structure of the industry.
- b. Multiplicity of compliance, scrutiny, audits, investigations and litigations for large pan India service providers
- c. Exemption from GST on Spectrum payment, License fees and Spectrum Usage Charge.
- d. Inter-state transfer and/or utilization of CGST and IGST.
- e. Refund of Accumulated balance in Input Tax Credit as large amount of Input Tax Credit is piled up which cannot be utilized in near future.

63. Procedural issues in GST Compliance

There are multiple procedural issues faced by the members while doing GST compliance. A detailed representation has been made by COAI, highlighting the issues and suggestions to the GST Council and to the concerned senior officers in the MoF/DoT, seeking clarity/ resolution from the concerned authorities by way of necessary notifications and clarifications.

64. Single sign-in via Unified Portal and Unified Dashboard and issues related to SARAS

A detailed representation was made to DoT regarding improvement of the SARAS System. Consequently, DoT held a meeting on 09.10.2023, to discuss the issues represented by COAI related to SARAS and since DoT is developing a 'Single Unified Portal and Unified Dashboard' for improving synergy between the SARAS and SARAL SANCHAR

portals. On 20.10.2023, DoT directed CCA offices to do the needful to guide the Licensees in submitting representations/ appeals against LF/SUC Assessments through the Grievance Module in SARAS, and also directed them to arrange:

- a. Demo Session on SARAS from Licensee's Login.
- b. Discussions regarding calculation of License Fees dues.
- c. BG Rationalization and new BG requirements.
- d. Payment Modules in SARAS and GAR6 & GAR7.

65. Industry meeting with Joint CGCA, New Delhi

A meeting was held in the office of Joint CGCA, New Delhi on 29.09.2023, wherein some key issues were discussed, the resolutions of which will significantly ease operations for businesses and contribute to reducing disputes, eventually benefiting both the TSPs and the Government. These are as follows:

- a. Issues concerning De-centralized Assessment of SUC.
- b. Multiple SUC Assessments and Opportunity to respond to Show cause cum Demand Notices.
- c. Resolution of Disputes/Grievances related to SUC Demands.
- d. Simplification of Verification Process for Access Service.
- e. Issues in DVR SOP including Anomaly in the formats.
- f. Issue with format of AGR.
- g. Issues related to improvement in SARAS - It was conveyed that SARAS is currently undergoing development and there is room for improvement in various areas like the substantial delays in generation of provisional receipts (URN generation), final payment challans, etc. resulting in

payment after due date and attracting interest liability.

66. Levy of SUC on Sale and Lease of Bandwidth

DoT had issued a notification on 26.12.2022, exempting the levy of SUC on the revenues from wireline services. However, as per a letter dated 29.03.2023, DoT has issued instruction to:

- a. Show revenue from “Sale/lease of Bandwidth, links, etc.” at Sl. No. 8 of the statement instead of Sl. No. 1A(ix) from FY 2022-23 onwards, and
- b. Deposit the SUC payable with interest on the said matter for previous years.

Thus, SUC is now being imposed on the revenue from the sale/lease of bandwidth, which is a wireline service provided under the access license. The issue has arisen primarily because of the AGR format. COAI has requested DoT for issuance of a clarification mentioning that there should not be a levy of SUC on Sale and Lease of Bandwidth provided through wireline, as the same is essentially a wireline service.

67. DoT Guidelines/Clarifications towards deduction verification exercise

DoT had issued clarifications on 03.02.2020, on verification of deductions claimed for the years for which dues have not been finalized by the Hon’ble SC till FY 2016-17 and for all the years post FY 2016-17. A new DoT order, dated 24.11.2021, was also issued mentioning that the guidelines are applicable only from FY

2019-20 onwards, which is causing challenges in the current processes for deduction verification. The clarifications issued in Feb 2020, were helpful in streamlining the deduction verification process. COAI

has requested DoT that the above clarification be made applicable for FYs 2017-18 and 2018-19 and have made various follow ups on the same.

68. Pre-Budget Recommendations for the Financial Year 2024-25

COAI’s pre-budget recommendations, including detailed representations regarding key issues related to Direct and Indirect Taxes, were submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Communications, among others. Key issues in the representation were:

- a. Multiplicity of Compliance, Audits, Investigations and Litigations for Large Pan India service providers.
- b. Removal of GST on License Fees, Spectrum Usage Charges and on Payment of Spectrum acquired in auction.
- c. Tax on self-supply of service.
- d. Service Tax on RoW.
- e. Direct Tax Issues.
- f. Indirect Tax Issues
 - i. Service Tax
 - ii. Customs Duty
- g. Key issues related to GST.

09

MEDIA ADVOCACY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH



COAI has strengthened its stature as the official and leading voice of the Indian telecom industry over the years which interacts directly with Ministries, Policy Makers, Regulators, Financial Institutions and Technical Bodies towards the progress and prosperity of the telecom industry and also bring forward steps to support India's digital vision. Today, COAI is seen as the pivotal association working towards establishing India as a leading digital economy empowered and driven through growing digital prowess and robust, inclusive modern digital communications for all. In between the increasing convergence of verticals and the past year of achieving the fastest roll out of 5G globally, COAI continues to work relentlessly towards a ubiquitous and affordable mobile telephony ecosystem in India.

COAI's intuitive and timely viewpoints on key regulatory and policy matters like spectrum allocation, LTGs' growing traffic and the need for fair share contribution from them, allocation of the potent 6 GHz band, aspects related to infrastructure like RoW and Fiber Cuts, adoption of Green Energy Open Access, among others, have credibly reinstated its thought leadership position amongst all relevant influencers and stakeholders. Through its strategic media mapping and outreach programs with the right set of messages, COAI has suitably represented the Indian Telecom industry amongst the media, government and other stakeholders, which has, in turn, yielded positive results.

Driven by the Executive Council's guidance and support, COAI's consistent efforts are aimed towards fortifying the industry's overarching significance and requirements for India's digital revolution. COAI's timely and effective interventions have paved the way for meaningful discussions, thoughtful deliberations and mutual exchange of ideas between member organizations, the government and other relevant stakeholders in the ecosystem.

Bringing the Telecom Industry's views and concerns to the fore, COAI has been able to consolidate its reputation of being an approachable organization that has the requisite expertise in all things telecom. COAI has become a thought leader offering insights on cutting-edge technologies like 6G, 5G, AI, etc. which would contribute towards the vision of a USD 5 Trillion Indian economy.

In a collaborative effort, COAI and the Government of India are working closely to strengthen the telecom infrastructure for greater resilience and efficiency. COAI has taken every step forward with the relevant authorities to enable robust telecom infrastructure and networks to be deployed, so that every citizen has access to reliable and affordable telecommunication services. By bridging the digital divide, this collaboration paves the way for true digital inclusion and empowers citizens to actively participate in the vibrant Indian digital economy.

Significant media activities by COAI in FY 2023-24

Fair-share contribution from OTT services

The topic of fair-share contribution from OTT players/Large Traffic Generators has been a longstanding issue within the telecom ecosystem. Basis the approach taken by members towards positioning the industry's views, COAI proactively conducted a media briefing session with senior journalists and selected publications and intervened at various junctures through statements and interactions with key media. COAI also made

multiple submissions to the ministry and came out with a White-Paper strengthening its point of view on the topic.

Media Coverage: Conversions in PTI, IANS along with other top print publications like The Times of India, Hindustan Times, Dainik Jagran, Economic Times, Business Standard, Mint and leading online publications like Moneycontrol, News18 and many others. Also, thought leadership articles were published in Outlook Magazine, ET Telecom, etc.

'Fair share' charge on OTTs will not violate net neutrality: COAI

Telecom operators want OTT players to pay a 'fair share' charge towards network cost based on the number of users they have, the traffic they generate and so on.

APRIL 10, 2023 | SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 | 10:07 PM IST

दूरसंचार कंपनियों व ओटीटी का विवाद सुलझाने को लेकर सक्रिय हुई सरकार

दूरसंचार कंपनियों व ओटीटी का विवाद सुलझाने को लेकर सक्रिय हुई सरकार

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Telcos insist on 'fair share' of contribution from OTT players

PICK UP THE TAB! Say their nominal ARPU doesn't justify investment made on upgrade

Our Business News Desk

Telecom operators on Thursday again urged the government to implement a revenue sharing model to ensure a 'fair share' contribution from over-the-top (OTT) players. It also called for a higher revenue from larger OTT players.

"When high bandwidth OTT applications carry heavy traffic with high-quality of service (QoS) requirements (HD video streaming, downloading, sharing etc), fair and proportionate charge needs to be paid to the network providers for facilitating their business. The low bandwidth applications which do not generate much traffic, the general data tariffs may suffice," SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said.

He said while telcos have been carrying the massive investment burden for deploying networks and delivering connectivity across the country mainly by themselves, OTT players have emerged offering bandwidth heavy services and generating disproportionately high traffic, compelling further upgrades and capacity enhancement of the networks, but contributing nothing to the network expenses. "Even in rural areas, where telecom service providers (TSPs) don't have viable business cases to roll out services, OTTs have led to increased demand for data services bandwidth, with nominal average revenue per user (ARPU), not justifying the network expenses in rural areas," he said.

He noted that the tariff

OTTs must pay telcos, says COAI

New Delhi: Telecom players on Thursday said that the government should provide a legal framework to ensure that over-the-top (OTT) players that are large traffic generators pay a fair and proportionate share to them for the services provided by them. India is undergoing the fastest 5G rollout in the world and more than 3.3 lakh 5G base transceiver stations have already been deployed by the telecom service providers.

"While telcos have been carrying the massive investment burden for deploying networks and delivering connectivity across the country entirely by themselves, OTT players have emerged offering bandwidth heavy services and generating disproportionately high traffic, compelling further upgrades and capacity enhancement of the networks, but contributing nothing to the network expenses," Lt Gen SP Kochhar, DG of Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), said. TNN



Misleading view of Fair Share impacting Net Neutrality

There were misleading and speculative views in media from certain entities attempting to mislead a public debate on a complicated issue, without substantiating how Fair Share would violate net neutrality or hamper innovation.

COAI proactively shared a statement in media on how Net Neutrality has nothing to do with the 'fair share' initiative.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in standalone stories from PTI, The Times of India, The Economic Times, ET Telecom, Business Standard, Financial Express, Business Insider and other publications.

COAI: Fair share charge doesn't affect free internet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, October 17

TELCOS' BODY COAI on Tuesday said the proposed 'fair share charge' does not affect access to an open and free internet, as it sought to debunk "misleading and speculative views being circulated by certain quarters" to allegedly "misguide" people.

The comments by COAI assume significance as the past months have seen the telecom operators and OTTs exchange fire over the telcos' demand that large traffic-generating apps must dish out part of the revenue (fair share charge) for sustenance and upkeep of communications networks.

Firing a fresh salvo in an escalating war of words, the COAI alleged that all concerns being raised, including favouring one website or application, and pricing differentiation, are devoid of facts and are speculative scenarios designed to mislead the public.

Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea are members of COAI. "There is no violation of net neutrality if a peering charge is applied at an interconnection point between two networks to compensate for an imbalance of data traffic," COAI director general SP Kochhar said.

COAI argued that the European Commission has also agreed that fair share does not violate the open internet and net neutrality principles.

"There are some misleading and speculative views being circulated by certain quarters regarding the proposal of 'fair share' contribution to be paid by large traffic generators responsible for generating over 70% of the total internet traffic, using the networks of the TSPs to deliver their services, but making no contribution to TSPs for the development, upkeep and sustenance of robust and quality telecom networks," it said.

Fair share charge does not affect access to open, free Internet: Telco group

The matter snowballed into a massive controversy following telecom carriers demanding a fair share price from large traffic generators or LTGs, saying that such large over-the-top (OTT) players contribute more than 70% of the total internet traffic today.



ETTelecom
Published On Oct 17, 2023 at 03:02 PM IST



NEW DELHI: The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Tuesday said that the proposed fair share charge would not affect access to an open and free Internet, and the content would remain fully accessible to 1.4 billion Indians without any blocking or throttling.

Fair-share charge on OTTs will not violate net neutrality: COAI

The proposed fair-share charge to be levied on from over-the-top (OTT) service providers will not violate net neutrality allegations around the same seek to misguide and confuse people, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said on Wednesday. Taking on claims made by technology and startup players, the industry body also stressed that telecom service providers are not in favor of extending the charge to startups, and small businesses, instead seeking compensation only from large traffic generating (LTG) OTTs.

"Contrary to the misguided opinions being floated in various fora, all of the concerns being raised such as favouring one website/application/service, pricing differentiation, decision on charging fair share on a case-to-case basis are imagined and speculative scenarios," COAI Director General S.P. Kochhar said in a statement. Representing the three private telecom service providers (TSPs) Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, COAI had earlier suggested levying a licensing fee of 8 per cent on OTTs on a recurring basis.

TSPs have claimed the charge is necessary for the development, upkeep and sustenance of robust and quality telecom networks across the country, as colossal traffic is being loaded on the networks as data demands grow steadily.

SUBHANY CHAKRABORTY

'Fair Share of Charges from OTTs won't Hit Net Neutrality'

"Contrary to misguided opinions", telcos are bound by licence conditions to ensure uniform access to web, says COAI

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Telecom operators and tech companies are at loggerheads once again, after the former proposed that large traffic-generating apps should share a part of their revenue with telcos for maintenance and upkeep of telecom networks.

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, in a statement on Wednesday insisted their proposal demanding compensation from large traffic generating (LTG) apps does not hurt net neutrality, as being suggested by tech companies.

"Contrary to the misguided

opinions being floated in various fora, a fair share contribution from OTTs (over-the-top players) will not violate net neutrality," said SP Kochhar, director general of COAI. Broadband India Forum (BIF) had on Tuesday contended that telcos' contention to mandate OTT

players pay network usage fees coupled with the government's intent to impose licensing framework on them would lead to a violation of the net neutrality principles and guidelines of 2016. Former telecom secretary Aruna Sundararajan-headed BIF repre-

sents big tech companies such as Meta, Google, Microsoft, and Amazon.

The fair share charge proposal "would bestow telcos with the powers to tilt the level-playing field to favour one OTT or another, thereby leading to discrimi-

nation, curbing innovation, and adversely impacting the startup ecosystem," it had alleged.

Telcos said this claim is misleading. Indian telcos are bound by their licence conditions to ensure net neutrality or a uniform access to web, Kochhar said. "The content and services for consumers would remain fully accessible with no traffic management or differentiation," he added.

COAI said there would be no throttling or blocking and no paid prioritisation for any service or application irrespective of the fair share charge paid. "The price for the traffic paid by end users will not change depending on whether the traffic generator is subject to fair share payments or not," it said.



LTGs endangering Make in India for financial motives

Some media stories reported developments where an Appstore provider, which is also a foremost Large Traffic Generator (LTG) globally, was learned to be removing startups and smaller India-made applications/players from its online property, quoting reasons of non-payment of their quoted charges to these applications, for hosting them.

COAI proactively shared a press note in media

on how LTGs are endangering 'Make in India' for financial motives and these same LTGs vehemently oppose the proposal for a fair-share contribution for the additional costs borne by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs).

Media Coverage: The note was covered in standalone print and online stories by wires like PTI and IANS and key publications like The Times of India, Economic Times, Business Standard, Hindu BusinessLine, Financial Express and other online publications.

COAI Accuses Tech Giants of Duplicity over Fair-share Fees

Our Bureau

SP KOCHHAR
Director General, COAI

Mumbai: Telecom operators' body has called out the duplicity of large traffic generators (LTGs) who refuse to pay their fair share for using telecom networks on the pretext that it would hurt startups and small businesses, but at the same time, demand startups for not paying app store very low fees.

Ironically, these same LTGs (large traffic generators) vehemently oppose the proposal for making a fair-share contribution to telecom infrastructure costs required to carry their disproportionately large traffic. SP Kochhar, director general of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in a statement on Tuesday. Delhi-based COAI represents incumbent telcos Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea.

"Moreover, the LTGs' advocates contend that this fair-share charge would deter small players/startups from being able to operate on the network," Kochhar said.

He clarified that telcos have reiterated that only four to five LTGs which generate mammoth traffic volumes would be required to contribute to network costs instead of burdening smaller players, startups, and micro, small and medium-enterprises (MSMEs) which generate low traffic.

"Therefore, these global behemoths seem fully prepared to oust the home-grown Indian cos based on pure financial motive, with no regard for this vital ecosystem of players who bring innovation and entrepreneurship to the fore," Kochhar said.

Google on March 1 banned applications by 10 local developers, citing non-compliance with its billing policies. To this extent, telecom and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and the minister of state for IT Rajiv Chandrasekhar held a meeting with the representatives of startups and Google on Monday to find a long-term solution.

Through kind of the Monday meeting, Google reiterated the prior demand apps, including Info Edge India's Naukri, Wacros, Shiksha: People Interactions, Huddle, online dating platform TrulyMadly, podcast app KakaFM, and online video streaming platform Aii, among others.

"It is rather surprising that these LTGs, which are generally global corporations based in foreign countries, are ready to evict non-paying small businesses as they expect the 'immense value' that their platform provides to the apps themselves prefer to enjoy a free-ride over the TSPs' networks, while profiting heavily from them," Kochhar said.

He added that these LTGs continue to make misleading claims that the proposed fair-share charge would hurt the startups, MSMEs, and smaller players and constrain innovation, "which is clearly contrary to the truth".

"Telcos have been pressing LTGs for a fair-share charge, which they say, will help them address rising network costs amid the upsurge in data consumption brought about by the fifth generation networks - a proposal that has been vehemently rejected by technology companies, as well as over-the-top (OTT) players."

Telcos slam tech giants' duplicity

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: Industry body COAI on Tuesday said technology giants are ready to evict non-paying small businesses from their app platforms though these large traffic generators (LTG) themselves prefer to enjoy a free ride over telecom service providers' networks.

The comments have come against the backdrop of internet giant Google seeking to impose a fee of 11 per cent to 26 per cent on in-app payments.

Google last week removed apps that were not paying the fee after the Supreme Court did not provide interim relief to companies behind these apps in their battle against the search giant's app marketplace fee.

"It is rather surprising that these LTGs, which are generally global corporates based in foreign countries, are ready to evict non-paying small businesses as they expect the 'immense value' that their platform provides to the apps, themselves prefer to enjoy a free-ride over the TSPs' networks, while profiting heavily from them," SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI said.

works, while profiting heavily from them.

"Moreover, they continue to make misleading claims that the proposed fair-share would hurt the start-ups, MSMEs and smaller players and constrain innovation, which is clearly contrary to the truth," COAI director-general S.P. Kochhar said in a statement.

After government intervention, Google has agreed to restore apps and work out a solution with apps over the dispute on payment charges.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has proposed a 5-8 per cent revenue share fee on large traffic generator (LTG) apps such as Google, Netflix, Facebook and Twitter to support the cost of maintaining their telecom infrastructure.

Google move

Google on Tuesday began reinstating about 250 Indian apps it had delisted from its Play Store over a billing dispute as it caved in to government criticism, but the squabble may not yet be over.

The matrimony, dating and other apps were being allowed back on the Play Store but Google will continue to bill the companies a service fee of 11 per cent to 26 per cent on in-app payments during the 3-4 months period the two sides will sit across to resolve the dispute.

Global behemoths endangering Make in India, says telco body

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Tuesday said that international giants are prepared to oust indigenous Indian companies for financial gains.

The remark was indirectly aimed at Google's decision to remove Indian startups and apps from its Play Store. Without naming Google directly, COAI implied that the tech giant is itself one of the Large Traffic Generators (LTG) opposing the COAI's proposed fair share charge (FSC).

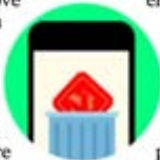
Google and Indian application (app) developers have been at odds ever since the search giant banned apps from 10 developers on its Play Store and later reinstated within a day. Stepping into the fray, COAI said that

app stores make significant revenues from developers and app users, as well as through data monetisation and advertising, among other revenue streams. The industry body said this is

evidently against the spirit of the government's flagship 'Make in India' program as well as the progressive approach to foster innovation and encourage small organisations.

"It is surprising that these LTGs are ready to evict non-paying small businesses as they expect the 'immense value' that their platform provides to the apps, themselves prefer to enjoy a free-ride over the TSPs' networks, while profiting heavily from them," SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI said.

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY



6 GHz spectrum band for IMT/5G

The mid-band 6 GHz band is critical for rapid and cost-efficient deployments of 5G, 5G Advanced and the future 6G mobile networks in India, with the exponentially increasing data demands which is expected to grow further. Continuing COAI's advocacy for use of 6 GHz spectrum for IMT and 5G, an interactive session was conducted with senior journalists of select publications and also

various industry submissions were made to the ministry which were extensively covered by leading publications. COAI also participated in industry stories conveying its views on the issue.

Media Coverage: Conversions in print and electronic media like PTI, PTI Bhasha, The Economic Times, The Financial Express, The Indian Express, The Hindu Business Line, Business Standard, CNBC Awaaz, ET Telecom and others.

AT KEY ASIA PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY MEET...

Telcos Want DoT to Seek Part of 6 GHz Band for 5G

Say any move to delicense this spectrum band for Wi-Fi services will hinder 5G growth

Our Bureau

Kolkata: Top telcos have urged the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) to bat for deploying upper portion of the 6 GHz spectrum band for 5G services in India at a key meeting of Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) that got underway in Brisbane on Monday.

They have also reiterated that any move to delicense this spectrum band for Wi-Fi services will hinder the growth of 5G services in India, and 6G, going forward.

APT is an intergovernmental body set up to drive information and communications technology (ICT) policy and regulatory coordination in the Asia-Pacific region.

A top-level DoT team will participate in the meeting of APT, a group within APT, to align all major Region 3 wireless spectrum matters, such as the 6 GHz band deployment for 5G, 5G+ and 6G services, and present a common proposal at the World Radio Communications 2023 conference in Dubai in December where a final decision will be taken.

The full 6 GHz spectrum

Slugfest over Airwaves

COAI represents India's top telcos, Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea

Letter to DoT comes amid slugfest between telcos and technology firms over 6 GHz spectrum band

Telcos want this band auctioned and fully made available for 5G services and 6G in future

band, which offers internet speeds up to 10 gbps, ranges from 5925 MHz to 7125 MHz (or 1200 units). The upper part of the band ranges from 6425 MHz to 7125 MHz.

"The DoT's delegation attending APT-2023 may kindly communicate India's support for 6425-7125 MHz for IMT (read: 5G services) and defend that position, and going forward, DoT may also take a further decision on inclusion of the lower part of the 6 GHz band (read: 5925-6425 MHz) for IMT," Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said in a letter, dated August 18, to DoT secretary Anurag Chandra.

Such a decision, it added, would create certainty around critical spectrum required for 5G and clear the path for auction of this spec-

trum. COAI represents India's top telcos, Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Its letter to DoT comes amid an ongoing slugfest between telcos and technology companies to corner the 6 GHz spectrum band. Telcos want this band auctioned and fully made available for 5G services now and 6G in future while tech companies like Google, Meta, Amazon, Microsoft, Cisco, Qualcomm and Intel amongst others want it delicensed to boost affordable broadband penetration across rural India via the Wi-Fi route.

"...some industry body(ies) have approached your good office, demanding that this band be delicensed for promoting Wi-Fi services but delicensing this important chunk of spectrum will seriously hamper the deployment of 5G+6G in India," COAI said in its letter.

It added that 6 GHz band is the only additional contiguous spectrum available in mid-band for 5G, and hence, vital for future growth of 5G and is also crucial as India firms up an action plan for Bharat 6G.

COAI said more than 400 units of spectrum was delicensed in the 5 GHz band in 2018 for Wi-Fi services, of which 255 units remained unused.

"Not using available spectrum optimally and demanding more would lead to waste of such a scarce valuable resource," it said in its letter.

Free up entire 6 GHz to enhance 5G services, COAI urges govt

RINGING IN CHANGES. '6 GHz band will enable better spectrum efficiency for mobile network operators'

Our Bureau

New Delhi

India is a mobile first nation and, therefore, Wi-Fi is not required much, said that is why opening the complete 6 GHz band for 5G services can help improve the quality of coverage, said the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Wednesday.

The 6 GHz band is a contiguous block of spectrum, which can provide better spectrum efficiency for mobile network operators. This will allow them to provide more services to customers while reducing



TOP PRIORITY. India is a mobile-first country, with wireless broadband penetration at just 3% of the subscriptions, said COAI

their operating costs. The insufficient spectrum in mid-bands implies extreme densification to meet mobile broadband demand. Extreme densification im-

poses unsustainably high costs (ultimately borne by users), increased carbon footprint, and may not even be feasible due to interference or site availability challenges, it said. The industry body has again urged the government to allow full 6 GHz band for 5G communications to all drive future demand as Internet of Things (IoT), autonomous vehicles, and smart cities continue to evolve.

"India is primarily a mobile-first country, with wireless broadband penetration only being 3 per cent of the subscriptions. Mobile data is the key driver for internet access. Indian population density is more than almost all developed countries, which have an extensive wireless OFC infrastructure. Therefore,

we are asking for allotment of unused 6 GHz spectrum to put into use," SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI, said reporters here. That is why the industry is recommending the provision of 6 GHz (5925 MHz to 7125 MHz), 6 GHz (5925 MHz to 6425 MHz) and other higher frequency bands for 5G and 6G communications, too, he said.

CRUCIAL ASPECT He added that 6 GHz band is crucial for enhancing the performance of 5G networks, enabling higher data speeds, increased capacity, and improved connectivity.

Spectrum in 6 GHz band key to 5G growth: COAI

FE BUREAU

New Delhi, April 10

AS THE GOVERNMENT'S vision document on 6G includes recommendation for delicensing part of the 6 GHz band for Wi-Fi, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has reiterated its demand to allocate the spectrum for mobile networks. The association argues that the spectrum will help them provide better 5G services at reasonable costs.

"Mid-bands like 6 GHz provide a balance of wide coverage and capacity which is critical to the rapid and cost-efficient deployments of 5G mobile networks in India & also meets the

exponentially increasing data demands that too at affordable terms," SP Kochhar, director general of COAI, said in a letter dated April 7, to telecom secretary K Rajaraman. The association said the shortage of 6 GHz spectrum would compel the telecom operators to densify networks or increase network capacity to meet 5G performance requirements, thereby leading to 60% higher annual costs. Without densification, 5G download speeds would be reduced to 50% if less spectrum is allocated in 6 GHz band, the association said, adding that the entire 6 GHz band which includes 59.25-71.25 GHz frequency should be allocated for mobile services.

Spectrum allocation to lead ₹3 lk-cr loss: COAI

New Delhi: Allocation of spectrum in 6 gigahertz band without auction would result in a potential loss of over 3 lakh crore to the national exchequer, telecom industry body COAI said on Wednesday. The Cellular Operators Association of India said that the government should earmark the entire 1200 megahertz (Mhz) of frequencies available in the 6 GHz radiowaves band for 5G mobile service as telecom operators need those to deliver 100 megabit per second download speed (mbps) and 50 mbps upload speed to subscribers. PTI

Telcos Differ with Govt Stance on 6 GHz Spectrum at WRC

Claim talks being steered towards band's designation for delicensed Wi-Fi use

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India's telcos are aligned at the Indian delegation's intervention regarding the 6 GHz spectrum band at an ongoing World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC), which they say are contrary to the originally agreed upon position.

In a letter to telecom minister Anurag Chandra sent Wednesday, the telcos have said that it appears that discussions are being steered towards the band's designation for delicensed Wi-Fi usage.

"Failure to designate this band as originally intended will not only harm India's IMT (mobile services) interests, but also impact the progress towards the development of a worldwide ecosystem for IMT in this band," industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea as its members, said in the letter.

The telecom industry sought immediate intervention of Chandra to ensure that the allocation of the 6 GHz band for IMT is decided. Tech companies have been press-

Stiff Fight

Telcos write to telecom minister Anurag Chandra. More will fight India's IMT mobile service interests. COAI

Tech cos have been pushing for the band to be used for Wi-Fi

hiring for the band to be used for Wi-Fi, and are at loggerheads with the mobile phone operators on this issue.

The WRC, which is set to conclude on December 18, will take a call if the upper 6 GHz band (5925 to 6425 MHz) is to be identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) or mobile usage.

While the identification will be done for Region 1 (Europe, Middle East and Africa), the decision will have implications on India, which falls under Region 3 along with China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc. "In light of the criticality of the band for India's 5G and 6G supple-



SAUL LOEB

ments, we had recommended strict adherence to the Indian position during the ongoing WRC-2023 and requested to kindly ensure that discussions, if any, be confined only upon consultation with all the stakeholders," COAI said.

Earlier, the Broadband Infra Forum (BIF), which represents tech companies, had termed the recommendations of a Department of Telecommunications (DoT) committee on 6 GHz as "biased" as the panel was one-sided with it comprising only telecom industry associations COAI and GSMA - with no representation from Wi-Fi bodies.

Telecom operators write again to government for allocation of 6GHz band for IMT

COAI urges govt to prioritise national interest in 6GHz band allocation for IMT

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Also read

Telecom operators have again written to the government requesting for an immediate intervention to ensure that the allocation of the 6 GHz band for international mobile telecommunications (IMT) is decided in a manner that prioritises national interest.

Quality of Services

COAI shared thoughts on Quality of Service with PTI, sharing that its member operators were being mindful of adhering to service quality as they roll out 5G.

Media Coverage: COAI's views were carried by news wire PTI and relevant publications such as Business Standard, The Economic Times, Deccan Chronicle, Navbharat Times, among others.

COAI: Statewise call drop data is difficult to get

Mobile operators' body COAI on Tuesday said the telecom regulator's instructions to telcos to report call drop data even state-wise entails several administrative and execution "difficulties" on ground, and that reporting should continue at Licensed Service Area level. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India last week asked telecom operators to report call drop data at state level too.

Difficult to Provide State-wise Quality of Service Data: Telcos

Kiran.Rathe@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: New Delhi: Telecom operators have said it would be difficult for them to provide quality of service (QoS) data state-wise or district-wise as sought by the regulator Trai because it comes under different jurisdictions for different licensed service areas (LSA). Further, there will be difficulties in aggregation and coordination of data as it will require a new ID system set up that will entail cost and time.

Carriers also want the government to set aside mid band 6 GHz spectrum for them, saying it is critical for proliferation of 5G services, and delicensing the spectrum would lead to loss to exchequer and will also impact quality and cost of next generation services. Tech companies though have also laid claim to the band, saying it can be used to propagate alternative unlicensed technologies such as WiFi-6, which can support 5G-like speeds of nearly 10 Gbps.

In a bid to check deteriorating QoS, particularly call drops, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had asked the telecom operators to submit data around network outages in any district or state to it because it adversely affects QoS and consumer experience. The regulator is also

considering bringing suitable regulations in this regard. Currently, QoS parameters are checked LSA-wise and telcos also submit data LSA-wise.

But the authority feels that the current system is somehow not working at its best and on various occasions, the outages at any particular district or area go unnoticed because the down time is averaged out in the whole LSA data.

To check that, Trai said, telcos should plan and implement systems for online data collection for QoS benchmarks and their processing to generate performance reports with LSA, state level or lower granularity.

Further, all the operators were asked to provide reports on network outages to Trai in any district or state.

But the telcos feel it would be difficult to implement and industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has

written to Trai to reconsider the mandate.

"So, while what we have been told is a laudable cause, we support giving the best services to the subscribers with whatever it takes. But the point is that the roll out and the monitoring of the telecom services has been done LSA-wise and all reporting hinges on that," COAI DG SP Kochhar said. "Now, if you introduce geographical boundaries of a state or a district, then there will be difficulty because it comes under different jurisdictions for different LSAs."

He added that there would be problems in coordination and aggregation of data as a new ID system has to be set up, which will entail cost and time. "Therefore, we have suggested to Trai to reconsider and make it LSA-wise that serves the same purpose," he added.

During a meeting with telcos on February 17, Trai had directed them to take urgent steps to ensure improvement in QoS while ensuring that the roll out of 5G services did not affect the existing telecom services in the country.

Telecom operators are staking claim to 6 GHz spectrum as current airwaves in the mid band is "woefully short of requirement" of telcos for rolling out 5G services. A 10, 6 GHz, with its propagation qualities, will be ideal for densely populated areas, especially urban locations.

CURBING CALL DROPS



Trai had asked the telecom operators to submit data around network outages to check deteriorating QoS

Reporting of call drop data at state level difficult: COAI to regulator

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Tuesday said that the sector regulator's instructions to telcos to report call drop data even state-wise entails several administrative and execution "difficulties" on ground and that reporting should continue at LSA (Licensed Service Area) level. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, last week at a review meeting, asked telecom operators to report call drop data at the state level too, amid rising instances of service quality issues and consumer complaints.

PTI

Launch of 'Sanchar Saathi Portal'

Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Railways, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, launched a citizen-centric portal called 'Sanchar Saathi'. The portal aims to provide various reforms and services related to mobile connections and

telecommunications. COAI issued a press statement lauding DoT for the launch of Sanchar Saathi.

Media Coverage: Basis media outreach, the statement was carried by publications such as The Economic Times, Deccan Herald, Business World, ET Telecom, Telecom Talk, Communications Today among others.

Now subscribers can track, block lost cellphone via portal

With the help of the portal, the device can be deactivated even if the new SIM card has been inserted as the device is tracked through its unique identification number (IMEI).



Reacting on the launch of the portal, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said, "On behalf of the Indian telecom industry, we welcome the launch of the Sanchar Saathi portal and congratulate the Government on taking this citizen-centric initiative that will go a long way in empowering mobile subscribers across the country and ensuring the safety and security of their mobile devices."

COAI, which has all the private telcos -- Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea as its members, said the various modules of the portal will help in reducing the incidents of mobile phone thefts and detect anomalies to help identify and prevent misuse/frauds. "Citizens will be able to know the mobile connections issued in their name, get unrequired connections disconnected, block/trace lost mobile phones and check the genuineness of devices while buying a new/old mobile phone," COAI added.

AI-based portal to trace and block stolen phones

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The regulatory procedures include CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) – for blocking stolen/lost mobiles; know your mobile connections registered in your name; and ASTR (Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition powered Solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification) – to identify fraudulent subscribers.

Director General of Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) S P Kochhar said the new regulatory framework will help in reducing the incidents of mobile phone thefts and detect anomalies to help identify and prevent misuse and frauds.

"Citizens will be able to know the mobile connections issued in their name, get unrequired connections disconnected, block/trace lost mobile phones and check the genuineness of devices while buying a new/old mobile phone," said Kochhar.

With 117 crore subscribers, India has emerged as the second largest telecom ecosystem in the world. In addition to communication, mobile phones are being used for banking, entertainment, e-learning, healthcare and availing government services among others.

The minister said the new initiatives would help in protecting users from various frauds like identity theft, forged KYC and banking frauds apart from preventing the theft of mobile devices.

What do you do when your phone is stolen or lost? Most probably, you will try calling the mobile number which you used on the phone. If the SIM is changed your hope of getting back the lost phone is dashed! However, now you have the option to trace and block your stolen phone through a government-run portal.

The Department of Telecom on Tuesday launched an artificial intelligence-based portal called Sanchar Saathi that enables users to trace and block their lost or stolen phones, even if a new SIM is inserted.

"If you lose your mobile phone, then you can visit this portal. There will be some identity verification, requirement of undertaking and immediately after this the portal will interact with law enforcement agencies and telecom service providers and block your lost mobile phone," said Union Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

While the technology giants like Google and Apple also offer the features of detection and tracking of devices, they cannot disable or block them.

Vaishnaw said the government has created a proper legal regulatory framework by which the mobile phones either lost or stolen can be disabled. "Only law enforcement authorities can disable the device and it should be done through a legal procedure," he said.

The telecom industry was facing critical network downtime in Kolkata, as service providers are suffering from widespread “intentional” fibre cuts by local cable operators (LCOs) across several localities. COAI shared a statement with the Kolkata media in this regard.

Local cable operators disrupt telecom services: COAI

The telecom industry in Kolkata and its neighbourhood is facing a critical downtime situation as Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are suffering from widespread intentional fibre cuts and damage by local cable operators.

Li Gen Dr SP Kochhar (retd), director general, COAI alleged the telecom industry is facing critical network downtime situation in Kolkata, as telecom service providers (TSPs) are suffering from widespread intentional fibre cuts/damage by local cable operators (LCOs) across several localities within the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and surrounding non-KMC areas, which is resulting in the customers suffering due to lack of essential digital connectivity.

The field teams of TSPs are also being prevented from restoration work, by being threatened/ man-handled and hostilely obstructed by the LCOs, leading to exorbitant delays, which is affecting their commitment to restore connectivity within the minimum turn-around time.

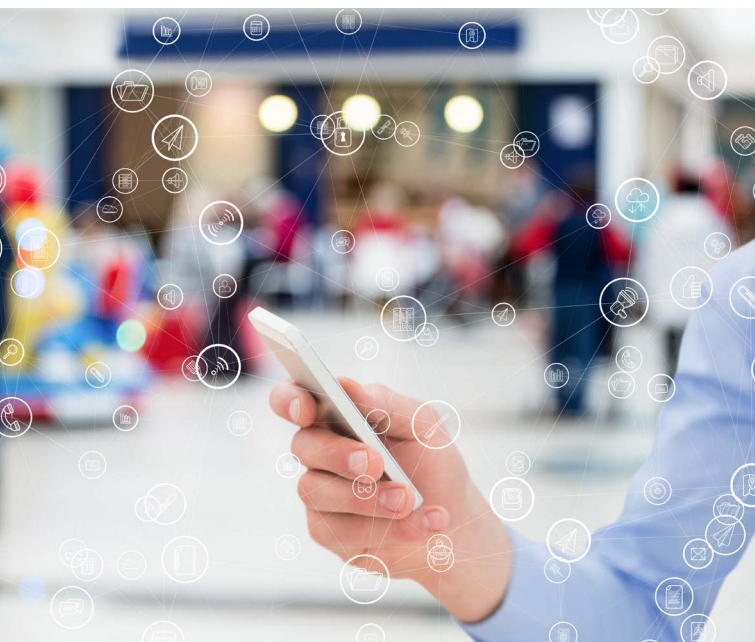
The TSPs are not even being allowed to acquire fresh connections by the LCOs.

While TSPs have always adhered to the directives of the local/ municipal authority, such unwarranted coercive actions from unauthorised entities plainly to skew fair competition and limit the customers' choice of service providers, is completely unfair and unjustified.

"We appeal to the state government and the local authorities to urgently intervene and prevent such unlawful practices by the LCOs, and aid TSPs in restoring operations," said the communiqué.

সিওএআই
এর নালিশ

এই সময়: কলকাতায় কেবল অপারেটরদের বিরুদ্ধে টেলিকম সংস্থাগুলির ফাইবার 'ইচ্ছাকৃত' ভাবে কাটার অভিযোগ করেছে সেলুলার অপারেটর্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন অফ ইন্ডিয়া (সিওএআই)। বৃহস্পতিবার এক বিবৃতিতে সিওএআইয়ের ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল এস পি কোচার বলেন, 'কলকাতা পুরসভা ও তার আশেপাশের এলাকার বহু জায়গায় স্থানীয় কেবল অপারেটররা ইচ্ছাকৃত ভাবে টেলিকম সংস্থাগুলির ফাইবার কেটে দিচ্ছে বা ফাইবারের ক্ষতি করছে। এর ফলে জরুরি ডিজিটাল সংযোগ পেতে গ্রাহকরা সমস্যার মুখে পড়ছেন।' তাঁর সংযোজন, 'আমাদের সদস্য সংস্থাগুলির ফিল্ড টিম সারাইয়ের কাজ করতে গেলে তাদের স্থানীয় কেবল অপারেটরদের হুমকির মুখে পড়তে হচ্ছে। এর ফলে সারাইয়ের কাজে প্রচুর বিলম্ব হচ্ছে।' সমস্যার সমাধানে রাজ্য সরকারকে অবিলম্বে হস্তক্ষেপ করার আর্জি জানিয়েছে সিওএআই।



TRAI's recommendations for Submarine Cable Landing in India

In a move to ease the rules for setting up submarine (undersea) cable landing stations (CLS) in India, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released its recommendations on the Licensing Framework and Regulatory

Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India. COAI issued a press release welcoming the TRAI's recommendations.

Media Coverage: The release was covered by PTI along with other publications such as The Economic Times, Business Standard, Financial Express, The Telegraph, Tele.net, etc.

Declare submarine cables operation as essential services: Trai while batting for ease of doing business

Mumbai and Chennai have the maximum concentration of submarine cables.

Written by FE Bureau
June 21, 2023 02:15 IST



However, the enterprises and telcos have not started complying with Trai directions so far, officials said.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Tuesday said Cable Landing Station (CLS) and submarine cables operation should be classified as critical and essential services. Since the functioning of submarine cables is crucial for the uninterrupted transmission of signals, data, and communication across national and international borders, Trai believes that the same should come under essential services.

Trai eases undersea cable landing station norms

Suggests amending system of permits to include two categories of locations

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 20 June

In a move to ease the rules for setting up submarine (undersea) cable landing stations (CLS) in India, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has released its recommendations on the licensing framework and regulatory mechanism for the sector.

On Tuesday, Trai recommended amending the existing system of permits to include two categories of CLS locations. These include the main facility and the fibre distribution point, known as the 'point of presence' (PoP) in the industry.

It has called for the international long distance/Internet service provider category-A (ILD/ISP-A) rules to be changed. This will enable licensees to get access, and extend their owned or leased dark fibre pair(s) in the undersea cable from the main CLS to their respective CLS-PoP location.

However, owners of CLS-PoPs will be required to fulfil all other security and regulatory/licence obligations. These include reporting requirements.

It has also called on the government to give all CLS-related operations (including associated activities such as layout, maintenance and repair of subsea cable systems) the status of essential services. This is owing to their critical role in the nation's high-speed data architecture.

In an important move, Trai has said that a section should be added in the upcoming Telecom Bill to promote, protect and prioritise 'CLS' and 'submarine cable' in India.

It has also recommended that Indian



Tata Communications	5
Bharti Airtel	3
Global Cloud Xchange (formerly Reliance Globalcom)	2
Reliance Jio	2
BSNL	1
Vodafone Idea	1
Sify Technologies	1

entities be facilitated and incentivised for setting up 'cable depots'. It stressed that undersea cable and CLS be considered a critical asset.

Damage to sub-sea infra has been recommended to be considered as damage to critical infrastructure of national importance, and is to be strictly dealt under the Indian laws.

"Trai's recommendations crucially recognise submarine cables as critical assets and provision protective measures for them. They also encourage self-reliance, while focusing on enhancing efficiency and security," said SP Kochhar, director-general at telecom industry body

Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

By the end of 2022, there were 15 international subsea cables landing in 14 distinct cable landing stations in five cities across India. These were in Mumbai, Chennai, Kochi, Tuticorin and Thiruvananthapuram, according to Submarinetwork.com, an industry news website.

Undersea cable operators have massively increased their total activated capacity in India, which surged nine times between 2016 and 2021.

The full traffic-carrying capability, called lit capacity, and the activated capacity on these international subsea cables were 123.67 tera bytes per second (tbps) and 83.8 tbps, respectively, by end-2021. "Trai's recommendations herald a new era for big data, global tech companies, data centres and content delivery networks, among others. With focus on promoting the laying of submarine cables and addressing ambiguities in the legal and regulatory framework for CLS and licences, these entities may be able to unlock the full potential of cross-border data flow. It will fuel innovation and fortify India's position as a data powerhouse," said Harsh Walia, partner at legal firm Khaitan & Co.

The recommendations may foster collaboration between submarine consortiums and telecom service providers in India. It may bring the much-needed clarity on ownership of CLS, he added. These include connectivity of terminal equipment to PoPs and power feeders, domestic submarine cables, stub cables and vessel repair.

The recommendations from Trai on the subject were welcomed by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents major telecom players.

"The recommendations are overall positive and will help in enhancing the robustness of the Submarine Cables ecosystem in India, which would add to the growth of the digital communications sector by strengthening our national infrastructure," said SP Kochhar, director general of COAI.

COAI said the recommendation that Indian entity-owned vessels will address undersea cable maintenance delays and reduce reliance on foreign providers for repairing subsea cables.

Trai backs including two categories of cable landing stations in licenses

ET Bureau - Last updated Jun 22, 2023, 10:56:00 PM IST

Synopsis

Trai has also called on the government to give all CLS-related operations (including associated activities such as layout, maintenance and repair of subsea cable systems) the status of essential services, given their critical role in the nation's high-speed connectivity and security needs.



Trai has suggested that the power of the Trai (CLS) facility be mentioned to make all approvals for an international submarine cable (ISC) landing in India.

The telecom regulator has recommended amending the ILD/ISP-A (international long distance/Internet service provider-Category A) permits to include two categories of cable landing station (CLS) locations — the main facility and the fibre distribution point, known in industry parlance as a "point of presence". It has also called on the government to give all CLS-related operations

Amended RoW Rules 2023 introduced by DoT

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) introduced the "The Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules in continuation to the earlier amendments made in 2017, 2021 and 2022, for further facilitation of rolling out robust telecom infrastructure in the country. The amendments complement the various initiatives undertaken by the Government to facilitate Ease of Doing Business

in the sector and support the industry in further enhancing and maintaining the networks more efficiently and expeditiously. COAI issued a press release welcoming the Amended Right of Way Rules, 2023.

Media Coverage: Coverage in Economic Times and online publications like Times of India, Financial Express, Business Standard, ET Telecom and others.

Business News / Business / Industry / Amended RoW Rules 2023 To Expedite 5G Deployment in India: COAI

Amended RoW Rules 2023 to expedite 5G deployment in India: COAI

The centre has directed that no fees will be charged by the appropriate authority for this temporary setup.

Written by **PTI**
August 18, 2023 18:31 IST

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COAI lauds the government's Right of Way rules amendments

TIMESOFINDIA.COM / Aug 18, 2023, 18:13 IST

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New For You

The COAI hailed India's Department of Telecommunications for introducing "The Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2023," which aim to bolster the 5G ecosystem and digital connectivity. The latest changes assist in resto ... [Read More](#)



5G

IIT graduates are landing salary packages below Rs 10 lakh this year

On cam! Drunk businessman pushes man off terrace at 5-star hotel...

Supreme Court allows 14-year-old rape survivor to undergo abortion

The COAI, India's telecom industry representative body, praised the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for the introduction of "The Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2023." The forward-looking move aims to improve the 5G ecosystem and digital connectivity for all citizens.

REAL BENEFITS TO HINGE ON HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES IMPLEMENT THEM

Changes to Right of Way Rules to Expedite 5G Rollout: COAI

Temporary overhead infra allowed in case of damage, process for small cell sites simpler

Progressive Changes

- Licensees can set up temporary overhead telegraph infrastructure when their existing underground infrastructure is damaged
- No fees to be charged by the authorities for this temporary setup
- Definition of 'street furniture' gives clarity
- Single application for multiple small cell sites

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The telecom industry has said that the latest changes in the right of way (RoW) rules allowing the setting up of temporary overhead telegraph infrastructure, clarity on street furniture and setting up of small cells etc. will enable rapid network reinstatement and expedite 5G rollout.

"It (the changes) will enable rapid network reinstatement in the event of underground telecom infrastructure damage, expedite 5G rollout by utilising the state's existing infrastructure, simplify application procedures for multiple small cell sites and allocate central government areas for small cell deployment at no cost," said SP Kochhar, director general, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), in a statement Friday.

The association, however, feels that the real benefits of these measures would depend upon their effective implementation by local authorities in letter and spirit.

COAI represents all three private telecom operators — Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The industry has termed the amended RoW rules as progressive and forward-looking, with a clear focus towards enhancing the 5G ecosystem and expansive digital connectivity for all citizens across India.

The latest amendments are in continuation to the earlier amendments made in 2017, 2021 and 2022 for further facilitation of rolling out robust telecom infrastructure in the country.

The latest amendment allows licensees to set up temporary overhead telegraph infrastructure when their existing underground infrastructure is damaged, and no fees will be charged by the authorities for this temporary setup. This would help restore telegraph services on priority, thus preventing major disruptions in services to the users.

The amendment, COAI said, also adds the much-needed clarity in the regulations itself, on the definition of street furniture, which means post or pole used for electricity; street light, traffic light, traffic sign, bus stop, tram stop, taxi stand, public lavatory, memorial, public sculpture, utility pole or any other structure or contrivance of such nature established over the property of an appropriate authority, which will aid in faster roll-outs and more efficient network deployments.

As per the revised rules, the appropriate authority shall make provisions allowing the licensee to submit a single application for multiple sites for the establishment of small cells. Further, the appropriate central authorities are now allowed to deploy small cells on their buildings and structures without administrative fees, except for charges related to power and fixtures provided by building owners.



EMF Advocacy Campaign

In continuation of DoT's advocacy against debunking the EMF myths hindering the existing/roll-out of Telecom Infrastructure, awareness webinars were organized in Delhi, Bhopal and West Bengal in 2023.

Media Coverage: Coverage in ET Government along with key regional publications such as Dainik Jagran, Agniban, Hari Bhoomi, The Statesman, Eastern Chronicle, etc.

ईएमएफ रेडिएशन पर जागरूकता कार्यशाला

भोपाल। दूरसंचार विभाग, मप्र लाइसेंस सर्विस एरिया (एलएसए) ने मौलाना आजाद नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी में ईएमएफ रेडिएशन पर एक जागरूकता कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया। यह आयोजन ऐसे समय में किया गया जब भारत आजादी के अमृत महोत्सव के रूप में स्वतंत्रता का 77वां वर्ष मना रहा है और यह सत्र दूरसंचार विभाग के पब्लिक एडवोकेसी प्रोग्राम के तहत आयोजित किया गया। इस कार्यशाला का उद्देश्य गति शक्ति कार्यक्रम नाम से राष्ट्रीय मास्टर प्लान के मुताबिक सामंजस्य हासिल कर सभी की समावेशी वृद्धि को प्रोत्साहित करना है। गति शक्ति से भारत के दूरसंचार ढांचे को खासकर डिजिटलीकरण एवं संचार के क्षेत्रों में एक जबरदस्त तेजी आने की संभावना है।

টেলিকমিউনিকেশন বিভাগের রেডিয়েশন এবং টেলিকম টাওয়ার নিয়ে সচেতনতা কর্মশালা

कोलकाता। दूरसंचार विभाग, मप्र लाइसेंस सर्विस एरिया (एलएसए) ने मौलाना आजाद नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी में ईएमएफ रेडिएशन पर एक जागरूकता कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया। यह आयोजन ऐसे समय में किया गया जब भारत आजादी के अमृत महोत्सव के रूप में स्वतंत्रता का 77वां वर्ष मना रहा है और यह सत्र दूरसंचार विभाग के पब्लिक एडवोकेसी प्रोग्राम के तहत आयोजित किया गया। इस कार्यशाला का उद्देश्य गति शक्ति कार्यक्रम नाम से राष्ट्रीय मास्टर प्लान के मुताबिक सामंजस्य हासिल कर सभी की समावेशी वृद्धि को प्रोत्साहित करना है। गति शक्ति से भारत के दूरसंचार ढांचे को खासकर डिजिटलीकरण एवं संचार के क्षेत्रों में एक जबरदस्त तेजी आने की संभावना है।

Mobile towers do not harm humans: DoT



The installation of mobile towers do not cause any harm to humans and animals, said senior officials of the department of telecommunications (DoT), West Bengal License Service Area.

It organized an "Awareness on EMF Radiation" on 29 November at Krishnanagar as a part of the public advocacy programme to dispel myths around EMF radiation.

Jayanta Koley, director (compliance), DoT, WB LSA addressed concerns of citizens while also debunking myths and misinformation related to health hazards connected with radiation from mobile towers.

The workshop was attended by government officials, consumers, general public, telecom service providers and other officials.

Mr Koley said the importance of mobile phones in our lives and development of the country. He offered an overview of the emanation of low-level electromagnetic fields from mobile towers.

He said, "Despite extensive scientific investigation, no link between mobile tower radiation and human health has been discovered. There is no scientific or medical evidence to back up the arguments used against the mobile towers. Cell towers generate extremely low-powered non-ionizing radiation that has no detrimental health effects on humans or animals."

During Q&A session, the DoT officers responded that network connectivity is indispensable for a connected future and a healthy infrastructure will support the advancement of many technologies, which in turn would enhance the way we all live and work.

The DoT and telecom operators are fully committed and equipped to ensure compliance of guidelines. These guidelines are designed to safeguard the concerns of citizens on EMF exposure norms and are adhered to to safeguard the citizens said officials.



DoT busts the myth of harmful EMF radiation emanating from mobile towers

According to DoT, based on scientific evidence, studies and reports available, there is no conclusive evidence of any kind of health hazard or EMF radiation from mobile towers.



ETGovernment
Updated On Jun 15, 2023 at 07:30 AM IST

Read by
836 Industry Professionals



In the webinar on Electromagnetic Field (EMF) awareness, organised by Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Delhi LSA, various aspects of EMF radiation were explained. The myth of harmful effects of EMF radiation from mobile towers was clarified by a

medical expert, Dr Vivek Tandon, Professor (Neurosurgery), All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

दूरसंचार विभाग, मप्र एलएसए ने ईएमएफ रेडिएशन पर कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया

मुंबई। दूरसंचार विभाग, मध्य प्रदेश लाइसेंस सर्विस एरिया (एलएसए) ने मौलाना आजाद नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी में ईएमएफ रेडिएशन पर एक जागरूकता कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया। इस कार्यशाला का उद्देश्य गति शक्ति कार्यक्रम नाम से राष्ट्रीय मास्टर प्लान के मुताबिक सामंजस्य हासिल कर सभी की समावेशी वृद्धि को प्रोत्साहित करना है। गति शक्ति से भारत के दूरसंचार ढांचे को खासकर डिजिटलीकरण एवं संचार के क्षेत्रों में एक जबरदस्त तेजी आने की संभावना है। मध्य प्रदेश में वर्तमान में 39,701 दूरसंचार टावर हैं और 50 एमबीपीएस तक की बॉन्डेड स्पीड उपलब्ध कराने में सक्षम आधुनिक ढांचा उपलब्ध कराने और मध्य प्रदेश को नेशनल बॉन्डेड मिशन के तहत डिजिटल तौर पर उन्नत बनाने के लिए इस राज्य को वर्ष 2024 तक और तीन गुना दूरसंचार टावर की जरूरत है। इस सत्र से आम लोगों को मोबाइल टावर की जरूरतों के संबंध में जागरूक करने और विश्वसनीय वैज्ञानिक साक्ष्य प्रस्तुत कर मोबाइल टावरों से हानिकारक विकिरण को लेकर निराधार आशंकाओं को दूर करने में मदद मिलेगी। दूरसंचार विभाग से वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के एक विशेषज्ञ पैनल ने नागरिकों द्वारा व्यक्त की गई चिंताओं पर चर्चा की और मोबाइल टावरों से रेडिएशन के संबंध में स्वास्थ्य को खतरों से जुड़े भ्रम दूर कर उन्हें सही जानकारी उपलब्ध कराई।



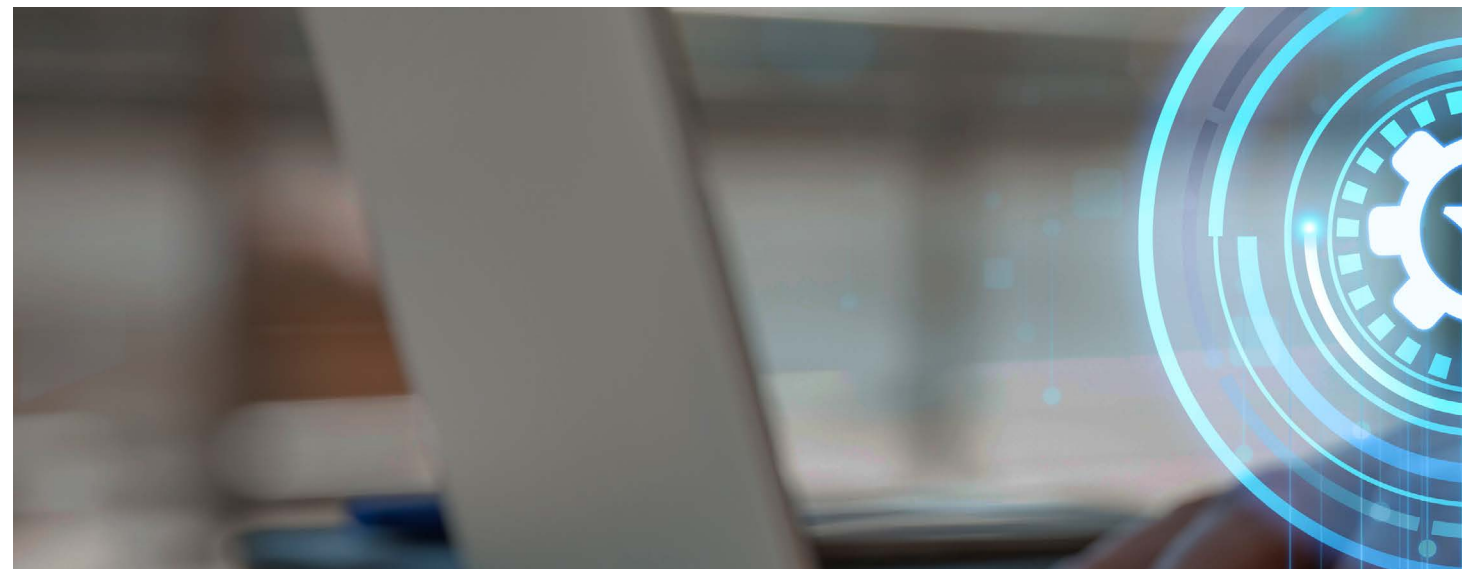
India Mobile Congress 2023

The India Mobile Congress 2023, held in October, is the largest telecom, media and technology forum in Asia, jointly organized by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).

COAI participated in multiple panel discussions

during the three-day event. Basis the COAI quotes in IMC releases and panels, DG was quoted in multiple industry stories on the sidelines of IMC 2023.

Media Coverage: Conversion in multiple publications through interactions, statements on the sidelines of the event. Coverage in PTI, CNBC Awaaz, CNBC TV18, DD News, Times of India, Business Standard, Fierce Wireless, etc.



Introduction of the India Telecommunications Bill, 2023

The government tabled the new draft of the Indian Telecommunications Bill, 2023, before the Parliament, seeking to replace the existing regulatory framework for the telecommunications sector, which is based on the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, the Wireless Telegraphy Act (1933), and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act (1950).

COAI issued a statement applauding the move by the ministry to table the Bill in Lok Sabha in December 2023.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered by leading wires, financials, and online publications like ANI, PTI, IANS, The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Economic Times, Hindu Business Line, Business Standard and others.

Cellular operators, internet service providers welcome Telecom Bill

BALANCING ACT. Say the Bill strikes a balance between safeguarding citizens' interests and growth of sector

By Ramesh Singh
New Delhi

Telecom industry veterans and executives have welcomed the Indian Telecommunications Bill, 2023 introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday, saying it paves the way for robust telecom services through a well-defined 'right of way' (RoW) framework, and such positive measures will significantly accelerate the delivery of digital connectivity benefits to every citizen.



GREATER GOOD. Industry veterans said that such positive measures will significantly accelerate the delivery of digital connectivity benefits to every citizen.

between safeguarding citizens' interests and ensuring robust services, and ensure a level playing field for all stakeholders involved. This would also ensure growth in all dimensions of the sector.

SECTORAL GROWTH. The overarching measures that prioritise security along with promoting innovation and infrastructure development, the Bill underscores a commitment to both the welfare of citizens and the all-round growth of the telecommunications industry.

For instance, the National Frequency Allocation Plan, an administrative document that sets aside airwaves for different purposes, has now been given statutory force. Auctions will be the "preferred" mode of allotment of spectrum, while administrative allotment will be used in cases such as satellite TV and broadband.

Telecom Bill in Lok Sabha

Provisions on lawful interception, or surveillance of telecom communications, have been retained as per the earlier Act. The Bill allows the Union government to take over the operations of a telecom network on the grounds of public emergency or safety issues.

Right-of-way laws have been updated to give local authorities such as district magistrates more power to adjudicate disputes. "[S]uch positive measures will significantly accelerate the delivery of digital connectivity benefits to every citizen of India," the Cellular Operators Association of India said in a statement.

The Bill requires telecom customers to undergo "biometric authentication". The person familiar with the thinking behind the Bill said that this was put in place to curb spam calls and messages.

The Bill has provisions allowing telcos to "re-farm" spectrum or use spectrum for technologies other than what they had bought it for — for instance, 4G spectrum can be repurposed for 5G.

The "trusted sources" regime, which came into being after the India-China border conflict in 2020 to stop imports of telecom equipment from hostile nations, is also part of the law now.

The Bill opens the door for spectrum allotments to satellite Internet providers such as Bharti-backed OneWeb and U.S.-based firms such as SpaceX's Starlink. However, only OneWeb and Jio have active satellite authorisations that have been granted.

Telco Execs say Telecom Bill Ensures Predictability, Availability of Spectrum

'Streamlines licensing regime: to speed up 5G rollouts'

By Ramesh Singh

Kolkata: India's top telecom executives called the Telecommunications Bill 2023 a watershed moment in the country's telecom reform process that would streamline the licensing landscape and ring in greater predictability around availability of spectrum and on related matters such as harmonisation and surrender of unused airwaves.

They said the new bill would also speed up 5G rollouts as it gives legal backing to right of way (RoW) rules. The legal backing would provide the necessary enforceability of central RoW rules at the local level, they added.

Bharti Airtel CEO Gopal Vittal said the new telecom bill offers in simplification of the telecom licensing regime, carrying on the intent of reforms started in September 2023.

"The proposed legislation ensures predictability and availability of spectrum, covering aspects such as reforming, harmonisation and trading/leasing/sharing, which will lead to the creation of a robust digital infrastructure and increased penetration of services," Vittal said in a statement Tuesday.

He added that the bill also brings more predictability around surrender of unused spectrum as well as on primary and secondary assignments.

Vodafone Idea (Vi) CEO Akhaya Moondra, in turn, welcomed the rationalisation of penalties and legal enforceability of right of way (RoW) provisions in the new telecom bill, which was a long-standing request of the telecom industry.

The bill, he said, rightly recognises telecom as a "critical infrastructure" and prescribes punitive consequences for those damaging it. "By highlighting the duties of users, the bill puts equal responsibility on consumers to meet the requirements of national security," Moondra said in a statement.

The government had on Monday introduced a new telecom bill in the Lok Sabha in a landmark bid to replace three archaic telecom laws.

Airtel's Vittal said the new telecom bill aims to simplify the "current convoluted system," which includes various types of licensing (license, registration, permission), into a more cohesive and efficient authorisation-based regime. Separately, the graded and proportionate penalty regime, proposed in the

GOPAL VITTAL
CEO, Bharti Airtel

The proposed legislation ensures predictability and availability of spectrum... which will lead to the creation of a robust digital infrastructure and increased penetration of services

AKHAYA MOONDRA
CEO, Vodafone Idea

By highlighting the duties of users, the bill puts equal responsibility on consumers to meet the requirements of national security

SP KOOCHAR
Director General, COAI

The bill incorporates strict provisions in case of unlawful interception of messages or unauthorised access to the same, to help ensure national security

bill, he said, would ring in increase of doing business and compliance while increasing the enforcement rate. The representatives said the new bill would lead to a reduction in infrastructure rollout costs as it differentiates telecom infrastructure from the property it is installed on. "The COAI said the word 'interior' had been replaced by 'authorisation' in the bill, wherein it has been specified that authorisation would be required to provide telecommunication services. "This will simplify the overall regulatory landscape for telecom services... the bill also incorporates strict provisions in case of unlawful interception of messages or unauthorised access to the same, to help ensure national security," SP Koochar, director general, COAI, said.

COAI applauds progressive telecommunications bill 2023

ANI | 19 December, 2023 | 10:00 AM IST



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Does foreign countries know 'sat to Mob' is ahead of 5G rollout?

India's 5G rollout: A timeline

India's 5G rollout: A timeline

India's 5G rollout: A timeline

India's 5G rollout: A timeline

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India's 5G rollout: A timeline

New Delhi [India], December 19 (ANI): The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) expressed its welcome to the Telecommunications Bill, 2023, presented in the Parliament today.



Direct-to-Mobile (D2M) Network

India is assessing the potential adoption of Direct-to-Mobile (D2M) technology on mobile handsets. Various ministries have been engaged to develop standards and pilot the technology before its potential rollout to citizens in 2025.

On the ongoing engagements around Direct to

Mobile network, COAI issued a statement conveying the industry position on the proposed D2M network and certain important aspects involving the same.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in multiple standalone and industry stories in Economic Times, Business Standard, Financial Express, Mint, New Indian Express, ET Telecom, Moneycontrol and others.

Internet-free video stream on mobiles next year

Aditya Karmalkar, secretary, Department of Science and Technology, said. "In the next year or so, we can actually launch this technology with an indigenous developed system."

Standard has been launched in the development of D2M technology since he was the director of IIT Kanpur. "The technology is already matured, some lab trials and field trials have been done. Now we have to do city-scale pilot trials so that the potential can be demonstrated," he added.

Eventually, the government along with Saankhya Labs and IIT Kanpur have been considering trials of the technology in Haryana and Bengaluru.

"We are going for a pilot, and during the pilot phase, there is no question of monetising it (D2M technology) for the entire country and even subsequently also. Let's see how this technology works," Chandra said.

Comments from Chandra, a senior official in the department, have expressed concerns that implementation of the D2M technology would increase the price of smartphones as it would require additional chips or dongles to be inserted in smartphones.

Saankhya Labs, which has designed the chips and dongles to implement the D2M solution in phones, expects the device prices not to be hit much with the integration of new chips in phones. "With large volumes, about 1-1.5 million, the chips will cost less than ₹150, and the cost of the dongle (with 3G/4G feature) would cost about ₹100-150," said Parag Wala, CEO of Saankhya Labs.

Wala said the company is in talks with mobile phone companies to integrate this technology in the phones by using Saankhya's chips. Besides, the company will launch a dongle in the market in the near or next that can be attached with the phones to receive the video content on phones.

For the trials of D2M, the government will offer the digital terrestrial broadcasting infrastructure of Prasar Bharati, for this, the D2M secretary also called for ensuring the entire 517 MHz spectrum in the band of 470-542 MHz to be reserved for D2M technology. "If D2M is successful, then the terrestrial requirements of D2M (terrestrial) mode will go down and we should actually assess this, if D2M is successful," Chandra added.

In conclusion, telecom operators, represented by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on this day said the spectrum should not be reserved for D2M, but should be auctioned in order to have a level playing field. During his address at the event, telecom secretary Navin Khosla also flagged concerns regarding the revenue of the incumbent players and the device prices. He said, however, said, "This is also offering a lot of opportunities for innovation and mobile manufacturers to come up with solutions, which will surely will increase the higher end hyper-luxury better benefits."

The government expects the D2M technology to be a major use in the video format. Further, the D2M technology would also help the government reach nearly 80% of the TV viewers across the country. Of the 140 million households in the country, only 10 million have subscription to cable, Chandra said.

According to the Telecom Commission Engineering Centre (TEC), as of today, no reliable devices are available for any of these broadcasting technologies or standards anywhere. In fact, countries like the USA, Brazil, Mexico and Canada among others are moving ahead for D2M technology.

The D2M body also flagged challenges recently with regard to the availability of a handset ecosystem, availability of D2M technology, business viability and opportunities and spectrum requirements.

COS WARN AGAINST HURRIED IMPLEMENTATION

Telcos Seek Reassessment of Draft D2M Networks Policy

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Telecom operators have sought a reassessment of the government's draft policy around establishing direct-to-mobile (D2M) networks to ensure a level playing field, and have warned of the possibility of regulatory arbitrage if such a policy is implemented hurriedly.

The government is exploring a proposal for D2M networks that will enable beaming of TV channels on mobiles without a cellular data connection. Telcos have been opposing any hasty decision as the technology is still immature.

"It's crucial to ensure that any D2M service implementation aligns with national legal and technical standards and does not result in regulatory arbitrage in providing the content services on mobile handsets," the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, said in a statement Monday.

COAI has called for a re-evaluation of aspects around level playing field, spectrum allocation, network integration and regulatory / cost arbitrage. It added that the spectrum envisaged should be allocated to service providers to provide D2M broadcasts as per market requirements.

The government has earmarked the 526-582 MHz band in the sub-GHz spectrum for D2M networks, which is currently being used by Prasar Bharati. "Building a dedicated D2M network by earmarking spectrum specifically for the broadcasting infrastructure providing competing / complimentary services would lead to breach of level playing field," COAI said.

The industry body has also sought clarification on the applicability of the D2M standards for currently available mobile phones, as no one supports the proposed standard.

The currently debated proposal is based on a proof of concept (PoC) undertaken by IIT Kanpur to establish a roadmap for D2M. The institute had partnered with Saankhya Labs for all the hardware requirements including chipset, radio etc. IIT Kanpur also released a white paper on the subject along with its recommendations.

To be sure, the government is yet to take a call on the issue as there is little clarity.

ET had reported in its August 5 edition that a proposal for D2M networks was being explored as the government felt there should be convergence for delivering content through broadcast and broadband, particularly with the launch of 5G services. The Telecommunications Engineering Centre (TEC), the DoT's technical wing, is evaluating the adoption of ATSC 3.0 standard into national standards, which will allow broadcasting of TV channels and content on mobile phones, similar to broadcasting on TV.

As per its submission to TEC, the telcos had earlier highlighted that ATSC 3.0 had not gained much adoption globally. Besides, 3GPP, which globally develops standards for mobile telecommunications, has already included broadcast features in its release 17 for 5G broadcast.

Telcos also believe that all video content in broadcasting is already available on mobile, so TV content on mobile won't be a big consumer demand driver.

Smartphone makers too have said that since a mobile device is designed for the global market based on 3GPP standards, it will be impossible to have space in the device itself to introduce new telecom generations of services like 5G, 4G, Satellite, etc. if manufacturers need to support legacy technologies indefinitely.

Business News / Technology / News / Ministry of information and broadcasting to pilot ...

Ministry of information and broadcasting to pilot D2M broadcast technology

4 min read • 16 Jan 2024, 11:29 PM IST

Shouvik Das

Technology partner

Industry challenges persist for the pilot launch of D2M broadcasting, as smartphones will require specialized chips or add-on dongles. Saankhya Labs has unveiled a chip and dongle that could tap millions of users for D2M broadcasting, with plans to reach a scale of 10 million users.

Direct-to-mobile services: Ensure implementation does not result in regulatory arbitrage: Telcos to govt

Industry body COAI said the proposal needs to be reviewed to ensure a level playing field for all participants.

DANISH KHAN | JANUARY 15, 2024 / 05:56 PM IST

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Growing adoption of Green Energy Open Access by states

Adding on to the Ministry of Power's progressive Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules 2023, COAI issued a press note applauding

the growing adoption of the same by States and the support by the Governments.

Media Coverage: Coverage in ET Telecom and other trade publications like Communications Today, VAR India, NCN News and others.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Progressive trend of growing adoption of Green Open Access by states

November 28, 2023



5 leading State Governments in India – Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand – have recently adopted the amendment to the Green Open Energy Access Rules issued by the Ministry of Power in May this year in their respective states. COAI had welcomed the Ministry of Power's progressive Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) (Second Amendment) Rules 2023, which enabled entities to aggregate their load by multiple connections served by the same electricity division of a DISCOM to 100 kW or more, for being eligible for availing Open Access for Green Energy. Green Open Access (GOA) is a regulatory provision that allows consumers to purchase electricity from renewable energy generators and/or demand Green Energy from the DISCOM(s). This mechanism empowers consumers to choose sustainable energy sources and contributes to India's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and fostering a cleaner energy future.

DoT, TRAI, power ministry's continued support driving adoption of Green Open Access by states: COAI

In addition to being a key enabler of India's economic growth and prosperity, the "essential infrastructure sector" has clear objectives to shift progressively towards renewable and green energy use to support the nation's carbon reduction goals and sustainability efforts, Kochhar said.

ETTelecom
Published On Nov 28, 2023 at 02:08 PM IST

Read by: 919 Industry Professionals



NEW DELHI: Due to the continued support from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and the Ministry of Power, the adoption of Green Open Access rules has started to rise in various states of the country, the Cellular



TRAI recommendations on Improving Telecom Infrastructure in Northeastern States of India

The TRAI issued recommendations for bolstering telecom infrastructure in North East, suggesting parleys with the state governments to harmonise their respective 'right of way' policies with related Central rules, as well as favouring provision of electricity to telecom sites on priority at utility tariffs.

Telcos welcome TRAI's recommendations to improve infra in N-E States

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Telecom service providers (TSPs) have welcomed recommendations made by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) that re-emphasise some of the industry's long-standing demands which included improving infrastructure in the north-eastern States.

"The industry is confident that if implemented in letter and spirit, these progressive recommendations will provide further impetus to proliferation of telecom and broadband services in the North-East region of the country, thus propelling socio-economic and digital progress for the citizens," SP Kochhar, Director General at Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), said.

COAI represents major TSPs including Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea.

MOBILE TOWERS

TRAI had last week released recommendations on 'Improving Telecom Infrastruc-

ture in Northeastern States of India' wherein it recommended for facilitating creation of enabling provisions in their policy to expedite accord of environmental clearance to TSPs for installing mobile towers and DG sets for tower locations.

Also, urged the State governments to provide electricity to telecom sites as a priority (within 15 days of connections request) at utility/ industrial tariff, and waiving off or subsidising last-mile installation charges for extending electricity connection to telecom sites in remote and hilly areas.

The Authority had also released a separate recommendation on 'Promoting Networking and Telecom Equipment Manufacturing in India' that included facilitating local value addition in participation with cross country value chains and exports from India.

It also recommended emphasis on "Telecom software" as a separate product line in accordance with contemporary softwarisation of network elements in new generation networks.

COAI issued a statement in media welcoming some of the important recommendation made by TRAI.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in multiple standalone and industry stories in PTI, The Hindu BusinessLine, ET Telecom, Republic World, The Pioneer, Assam Tribune and other regional publications as well.

Recommendations on boosting telecom infra in NE lauded

NEW DELHI, Sept 25: Industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Monday said that the latest recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for boosting telecom infrastructure in Northeastern states are progressive and will drive socio-economic and digital progress in the region.

TRAI's recommendation on exemption of Right of Way (RoW) charges in the rural, tribal and hilly regions for a five-year period will encourage telecom operators to invest further towards network deployments in lesser populated regions, the association said in a statement.

"The industry is confident that if implemented in letter and spirit, these

progressive recommendations will provide further impetus to proliferation of telecom and broadband services in the Northeastern region of the country, thus propelling socio-economic and digital progress..." COAI director general SP Kochhar said.

Telcos, including Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, are members of COAI.

On provisioning power supply for the telecom sector, TRAI has recommended that electricity should be provided in telecom sites as a priority (within 15 days of connections request) and at utility/ industrial tariff rates.

"Further, waiving off or subsidising last mile installation charges for extending electricity connection to telecom sites

in remote and hilly areas has been recommended. These would serve in faster and more economic operations of the sector, eventually benefitting the consumers," COAI pointed out.

Enabling provisions recommended to be incorporated in the Ministry of Environment and Forests' policy to expedite grant of environmental clearance to telcos for installing mobile towers and DG sets for tower locations, would hasten telecom infrastructure development in the region, according to COAI.

TRAI's earlier recommendations on use of street furniture for small cell and aerial fiber deployments have been advised to be implemented to strengthen 5G deployments. - PTI

TRAI recommendations on boosting telecom infra in northeast progressive: COAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body COAI on Monday said regulator TRAI's latest recommendations on boosting telecom infrastructure in northeastern states are progressive and will drive socio-economic and digital progress in the region.

TRAI's recommendation on exemption of Right of Way (RoW) charges in the rural, tribal and hilly regions for a five-year period will encourage telecom operators to invest further towards network

deployments in lesser populated regions, the association said in a statement.

"The industry is confident that if implemented in letter and spirit, these progressive recommendations will provide further impetus to proliferation of telecom and broadband services in the northeastern region of the country, thus propelling socio-economic and digital progress..." Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) Director General S P Kochhar said.

Cabinet's approval for three Semiconductor Units in India

On the Union Cabinet approving the establishment of three semiconductor units under the 'Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystems in India', COAI shared a


statement with the media lauding the significance of this move.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in leading wires like PTI, IANS and publications like Economic Times, ET Telecom, Dainik Bhaskar, The Statesman and other trade publications.

India set to become global semiconductor manufacturing destination: Industry

PTI - Last Updated: Mar 01, 2024, 03:57:00 PM IST

Synopsis
The Union Cabinet's approval of three semiconductor manufacturing units, with an investment of Rs 1.26 lakh crore, is a significant step towards achieving self-sufficiency and making India a global chip making destination. It will benefit various sectors, advance the 'Digital India' mission, and pave the way for more semiconductor fabs and OSAT units, as well as semiconductor product design companies.



The Union Cabinet's nod to three upcoming semiconductor manufacturing units is a step towards self-sufficiency and makes the country's dream of becoming a global chip making destination achievable, according to industry players. The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved setting up three semiconductor-making units, entailing an investment of Rs 1.26 lakh crore, as part of an attempt to cut India's dependence on imports to meet the requirements of chips.

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India will soon emerge as global chip manufacturing: Industry

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 1 MARCH

Top industry bodies on Friday hailed the government's decision to clear three semiconductor fabrication (fab) manufacturing projects worth Rs 1.3 lakh crore, saying that the emergence of the country as a global semiconductor manufacturing destination "no longer seems to be a distant dream."

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday approved three semiconductor units that will start construction within the next 100 days and generate direct employment of 20,000 advanced technology jobs and nearly 60,000 indirect jobs.

Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) told IANS that by 2027, "India will have the fab and Outsourced semiconductor assembly and test (OSAT) units producing."

"By the end of the decade, we may have more than 10 fabs and 20 OSAT units in production, besides many semiconductor product design companies," Mohindroo added.

The semiconductor fab with 50,000 wafers per month capacity will be set up by Tata Electronics Private Ltd (TEPL) in partnership with Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp (PSMC), Taiwan, in Dholera, Gujarat. This fab will be constructed with an investment of Rs 91,000 crore.

As per Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), the approval on the establishment of three semiconductor units under the India Semiconductor Mission is a positive and commendable development.

"This serves as an excellent example for our nation towards attaining self-sufficiency in line with our Prime Minister's vision of 'Atmanirbharata' and will further inspire India's goals to become a global manufacturing and supply chain hub," Kochhar said in a statement.

Devices · 2 Min Read

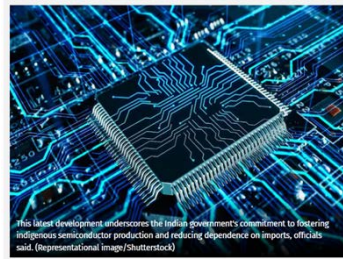
Semiconductor units to support India's vision of self-reliance in manufacturing ecosystem: Associations

Union telecom and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a press briefing that the abovementioned units will generate direct employment of 20,000 advanced technology jobs and about 60,000 indirect jobs.

ETTelecom
Updated On Mar 1, 2024 at 11:57 AM IST

Industry Lauds Union Cabinet Nod for 2 Semiconductor Plants in Gujarat, 1 in Assam, with Estimated Investment of Rs 1.26 Lakh Crore

Reported By: Bhawani Guha Majumder · News18.com · Last Updated: FEBRUARY 29, 2024, 2:44 PM · New Delhi, India



The centrepiece of this initiative is the creation of India's inaugural commercial semiconductor fabrication unit, a joint venture between Tata Electronics Private Limited and Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp (PSMC), set to be situated in Gujarat's Dholera.

This latest development underscores the Indian government's commitment to fostering indigenous semiconductor production and reducing dependence on imports, officials said. (Representational Image/Shutterstock)

The union cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has cleared three proposals for semiconductor plants, in a significant move aimed at bolstering India's chipmaking capabilities. The decision, announced on Thursday,



COAI Year-End Perspective for 2023 and 2024 Outlook

On the year 2023 ending, COAI issued a press note with the year-end perspective of the Indian telecom industry for 2023 and the future outlook for 2024.

Media Coverage: Coverage in PTI and other publications like Economic Times, Financial Express, ET Telecom, BW Businessworld and others. Also, authored articles of DG COAI were published in ET Telecom, Communications Today, Tele.Net Magazine, among others.



The telecom industry faces a "major challenge" as large traffic-generating digital platforms do not contribute to network costs, COAI said on Friday asserting that the "conundrum" is placing undue burden on telcos, hampering their financial sustainability and impeding further investments into network enhancements.



Chakshu Portal launch by Department of Telecommunications


The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) launched the 'Chakshu' facility on the Sanchar Saathi portal to enable citizens to report suspected fraud communication. The users of the Sanchar Saathi portal can report suspected fraudulent

communications they received over WhatsApp, SMS, or phone calls using the Chakshu feature. COAI shared a statement with media applauding the Ministry of Communications and DoT on the launch.

Media Coverage: The statement was covered in multiple industry stories from IANS, ET Telecom, News18, Voice&Data and other publications.


DoT launches Digital Intelligence Portal, 'Chakshu' facility to curb cybercrimes, financial frauds

Union telecom, IT and railways minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, while announcing these new initiatives, said that the government has been persistently making efforts to check cyber frauds under the secure India project at three levels: national, organisational, and individual, as per an official statement from the Ministry of Communications.



ETTelecom
Updated On Mar 5, 2024 at 12:39 PM IST

Read by:
1156 Industry Professionals



NEW DELHI: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Monday launched its 'Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)' to curb the misuse of telecom resources in cybercrimes and financial frauds, and the 'Chakshu' facility on the Sanchar Saathi portal to enable citizens to report suspected fraud communication.

Govt introduces new programs to combat cybercrime and the improper use of telecom resources

Sanchar Saathi portal can report suspected fraudulent communications they received over WhatsApp, SMS, or phone calls using the Chakshu feature.

Ayushi Singh
05 Mar 2024 09:56 IST




Govt aims to curb the misuse of telecom resources in cyber-crime and financial frauds

The 'Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)' and the 'Chakshu' feature on the Sanchar Saathi portal are the two new projects that the Ministry of Communications (MoC) has introduced. The Chakshu facility is an initiative enabling citizens to proactively report suspected fraudulent communication, the MoC said on Monday. Meanwhile, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) DIP is for coordination among stakeholders to curb the misuse of telecom resources in cyber-crime and financial frauds.

Chakshu & DIP: Govt Activates New Defence Against Suspicious Calls and Texts to Fight Scams

• Reported By: [Bhaswati Guha Majumder](#) • Edited By: [Nitya Thirumalai](#) • [News18.com](#) • Last Updated: MARCH 05, 2024, 10:44 IST • [New Delhi, India](#)



The government has assured that usernames and details of citizens raising the complaints will remain confidential and will not be shared with any third party. (Getty Images)


Named after the Hindi word for "eye", 'Chakshu' enables citizens to report fraudulent communications received via calls, SMS, or platforms like WhatsApp. Upon receiving such reports, the platform initiates re-verification procedures, and on failing that, the number in question will be disconnected

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Following the success of the Sanchar Saathi portal, which facilitated the discontinuation of over 1 crore fraudulent connections and safeguarded Rs 1,000 crore in citizens' money since its launch in May last year, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has introduced two new initiatives for stakeholders and citizens.

Minister of Communications and Electronics & IT Ashwini Vaishnaw, along with MoS Devusinh Chauhan, unveiled the 'Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)' to foster collaboration among stakeholders in combatting the misuse of telecom resources in cyber-crime and financial frauds. Additionally, they launched 'Chakshu', now accessible through the Sanchar Saathi website, to empower citizens to proactively report suspected fraudulent communications.



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Abolition of 'Wireless Operating License' by Government

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) abolished the Wireless Operating License (WOL) for establishing and maintaining telecommunications in India. The WOL was mandatory for Access Services authorization across various licenses until its discontinuation in November 2016. The DoT's decision to abolish the WOL aims to simplify regulations, ease compliance for Telecom Service

Providers (TSPs), improve the ease of doing business, and expedite network deployment.

COAI shared a statement lauding the same with media.

Media Coverage: The statement was included in industry stories from publications like IANS, The Economic Times, ET Telecom, Telecom Talk, Communications Today and other online publications.



Wireless Operating Licence for Telecom Services Nixed

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Tuesday abolished the need for a wireless operating licence (WOL) to establish and operate telecommunications networks, paving the way for a simplified regulatory regime that would also enable faster rollout of networks and increase mobile broadband coverage in India.

As per a DoT notification dated March 11, a WOL is not required with immediate effect for a unified licence, VSAT, unified licence (virtual network operator) with authorisation for national and international long-distance services, GMPCS, machine-to-machine facilities, etc.

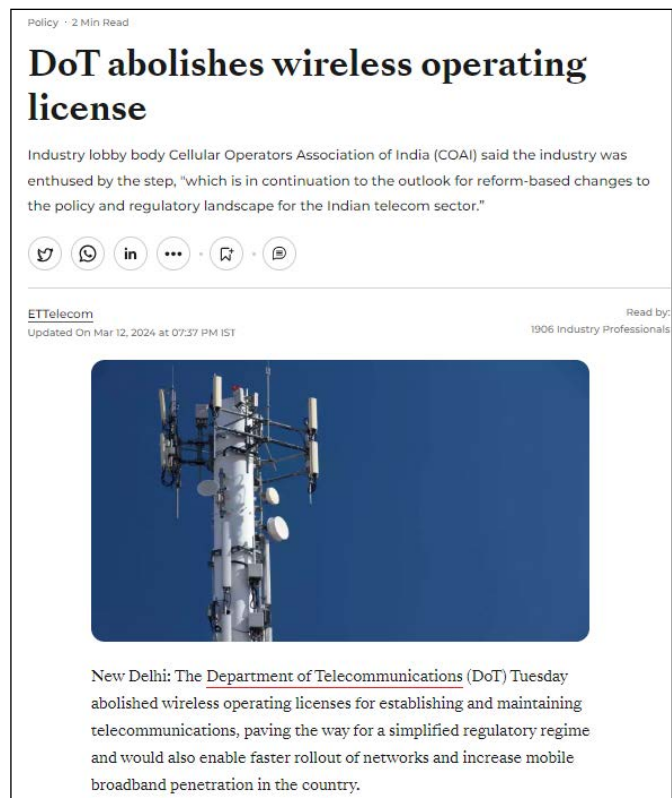
"However, for entities who intend to establish or operate a transmitting station and have not been granted any licence under Section 4 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, WOL will continue to be required as per the existing procedure," DoT said.

Industry lobby body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said the industry was enthused by the step, "which is in continuation to the outlook for reform-based changes to the policy and regulatory landscape for the Indian telecom sector".

As per the government, the requirement of WOL for licensees under Section 4 of the Indian Telegraph Act have been abolished altogether and no separate WOL would be required for establishing, maintaining or working of telecommunications including radio equipment, the association said. "We understand that it includes the WOL for microwave frequency bands as well, which is a positive development for the industry".

DoT, however, said the licensee, who obtains licence under Section 4 of Indian Telegraph Act, shall still be required frequency assigned from the WPC wing of the DoT, permitting use of appropriate frequencies and parameters for the establishment, maintenance or operation of transmitting stations.

Move paves the way for a simplified regulatory regime that will enable faster rollout




Policy · 2 Min Read

DoT abolishes wireless operating license

Industry lobby body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said the industry was enthused by the step, "which is in continuation to the outlook for reform-based changes to the policy and regulatory landscape for the Indian telecom sector."

ETTelecom
Updated On Mar 12, 2024 at 07:37 PM IST

Read by: 1906 Industry Professionals



New Delhi: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Tuesday abolished wireless operating licenses for establishing and maintaining telecommunications, paving the way for a simplified regulatory regime and would also enable faster rollout of networks and increase mobile broadband penetration in the country.

Industry hails abolition of wireless operating license for ease of doing biz

The industry on Tuesday welcomed the government's progressive approach towards technological advancement of the nation, including the abolition of the wireless operating license (WOL)

IANS | 12 Mar 2024 8:30 PM (Updated: 12 Mar 2024 8:30 PM)

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ARTICLES


Throughout the year, COAI has been proactive in sharing its perspective on a multitude of relevant industry topics. Multiple insightful COAI-authored articles were published across leading publications, delving into crucial subjects such as fair share from OTTs, spectrum, the potential of the 6 GHz band for IMT, cybersecurity, India's 6G vision, digital divide, the emergence of Network as a Service, outlook for the year 2024, union budget recommendations, the imperative of green telecommunications, the

burgeoning landscape of startups in the telecom sector, Web 3.0, women in technology, among others.

Media Coverage: These thought leadership articles were published in leading publications like Financial Express, ET Telecom, Outlook Magazine, Moneycontrol, Voice&Data Magazine, Communications Today, tele.net Magazine, Telecom Drive and others.

Understanding Fair Share: Why contribution from OTTs is critical?

By Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI



The Indian telecom sector's proposal for a fair-share contribution from Over-the-Top (OTT) services to support network expenses and expansion has ignited a heated debate. While differing views have emerged, here's an attempt to clearly articulate the concept of fair-share and its rationale, while debunking some popular misconceptions.

Let's draw an analogy between constructing a building and creating & operating telecom networks. The cost of land for a building is akin to the entry and license fees paid by telecom companies. Constructing the building is similar to building a network and acquiring spectrum. Building operation costs include electricity, water, maintenance and sanitation, while in telecom, it encompasses running a network in all its aspects, including technology refresh/upgrades.

In both cases, the recovery of the investments/costs is achieved through rent for a building and revenue from services for telecom networks. If an occupant of a building (or a user of a network) sits/rides on top for free, e.g., OTT, and doesn't contribute to land/building/network costs by refusing to pay rent or for maintenance or upgrades while benefiting directly from the property/network, the building or network becomes a non-profitable enterprise for the owner, even though profits accrue to the 'free' occupant who cannot conduct his/her business without the building/network.

The fallacious argument that revenue is accrued when OTTs drive subscribers to the telecom networks is ill founded. A fact is that the bandwidth-heavy services offered by OTTs lead to increased network traffic, necessitating further upgrades and capacity enhancement. Similarly, the business activities of unauthorised building occupants lead to ongoing strengthening and expansion costs, alongside rising operational expenses. In India, with its low tariff rates and Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), the added traffic from OTTs does not offset the substantial investments made by TSPs.


It is often argued that TSPs could always hike their tariffs to make up for the required revenues. But that is not the intent of this sector, which is committed to facilitating the national goal of Digital India and fulfilling the 'Right to Internet' for all Indian citizens. Therefore, the focus of the TSPs would be on applications and services. While the significant 5G investments by TSPs are being taken for granted, the nation aims for leadership in advanced technologies like 6G, which will demand more bandwidth, increasing network pressures and investment needs. For TSPs to invest further, they need fair returns. The Indian telecom sector, which positioned the nation on the global digital map, has provided affordable digital connectivity across the country and introduced advanced technologies like 5G.

It's imperative that responsible contributions are needed from all stakeholders in the digital ecosystem to ensure the continued progress of our digital ambitions. We hope for a greater sense of holistic development and benefits for all to take centre stage in this matter, looking forward to similar initiatives in the Indian market.

Tax reforms, regulatory relief: Indian telecom's call to action in Union Budget 2024-25

By achieving the fastest 5G rollout globally, the Indian telecom industry has showcased its potential to drive the vision of a digitally empowered India.

MONEYCONTROL NEWS | JANUARY 27, 2024 | 10:26 PM IST



With India's rapid stride in the global 5G rollout, the telecom industry finds itself at the forefront of technological advancement.

By Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar


TELECOM TALKS

DATA SECURITY

LT GEN DR S P KOCHHAR

NAVIGATING THE COMPLEX CYBERSECURITY TERRAIN

As technology continues to advance and the security landscape becomes more interconnected, businesses must adopt a multi-pronged strategy to deal with it



India is experiencing technological revolution at an unprecedented pace. As technology continues to advance and the security landscape becomes more interconnected, businesses must adopt a multi-pronged strategy to deal with it.

IMPACT OF NEW-AGE TECHNOLOGIES


Emerging technologies and innovations like cloud computing, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the way businesses operate. While these technologies offer immense potential, they also introduce new security challenges. The shift towards cloud-based services, for instance, increases the attack surface, while the proliferation of IoT devices creates a complex web of vulnerabilities.

Businesses must stay vigilant, investing in robust security measures and adopting a proactive stance to address these challenges. This includes regular security audits, employee training, and the implementation of advanced threat detection systems.

Artificial Intelligence plays a dual role in cybersecurity: it acts as both a defence tool and a potential weapon for attackers.

Navigating Telecom Manufacturing Landscape In India: Turning Challenges into Opportunities

By Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar




The Indian telecom manufacturing sector is at a crossroads. While it faces significant challenges, it also holds immense potential for growth and innovation. To thrive in this competitive landscape, manufacturers must embrace change and focus on sustainable development.

Key challenges include the need for advanced technology, skilled workforce, and efficient supply chains. However, these challenges also present opportunities for growth. By investing in research and development, manufacturers can create high-quality products that meet the demands of the global market.

The government's support through various initiatives and policies is crucial for the sector's growth. Collaboration between industry, academia, and government is essential to overcome the challenges and unlock the full potential of the Indian telecom manufacturing landscape.

Essentials for an effective AI mould for India

By Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar



The 'knowledge' of embedded artificial intelligence and GenAI's 'wisdom' need to work efficiently together to produce fruitful results.


Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the way we live and work. However, to fully harness its potential, we need a solid foundation of knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is the raw material, while wisdom is the ability to apply it effectively.

In the context of AI, knowledge refers to the data and algorithms that power the technology. Wisdom, on the other hand, is the ability to understand the ethical implications and societal impact of AI. Both are essential for creating a responsible and effective AI ecosystem.

India has a unique opportunity to lead in AI by focusing on both knowledge and wisdom. By investing in education, research, and innovation, we can build a strong foundation for the future of AI in India.

Exploring the historical, current and future implications of spectrum

By Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar



Spectrum is the foundation of modern communication. It has shaped the way we connect and interact. As technology advances, the demand for spectrum continues to grow, making it a critical resource for the future.

Understanding the historical context of spectrum management is essential for addressing current challenges. The evolution of spectrum management has been marked by innovation and collaboration. As we move forward, it's crucial to explore new ways of utilizing spectrum to support the growing needs of the digital economy.

The future of spectrum management lies in the hands of policymakers and industry leaders. By working together, we can ensure that spectrum is managed responsibly and sustainably, paving the way for a bright future of communication technology.

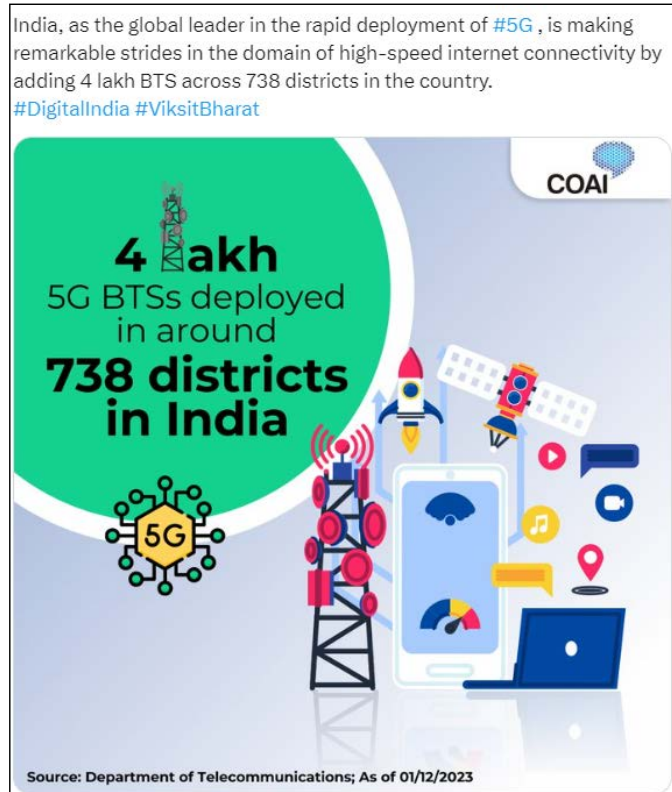
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Digital Media Presence & Engagements

5G in India






India's rapid 5G deployment positions it as a frontrunner in the telecom sector. COAI's digital

platform has extensively covered 5G topics, including its presence across sectors and skill development initiatives, showcasing India's leadership in telecommunications.



India's Telecom Flag is flying high!
Connecting millions, powering progress: India's telecom sector celebrates a decade of growth in smartphone data consumption, mobile phone manufacturing, **#5G** roll-out, and internet users. This remarkable achievement reflects the resilience and innovation driving India's telecommunications landscape.

Telecom Advancements In A Decade

		MAY 2014	DEC 2023
	No. of BTS Increased	6.49 Lakh	28 Lakh
	Optical Fiber Laid Increased	10.62 Lakh Km	39 Lakh Km
	Median Internet Speed Increased	1.3 Mbps	75.8 Mbps
	Cost of Data Decreased	₹269 Per GB	₹9.94 Per GB
	Internet Users Increased	25.15 Cr	88.12 Cr

Source: DDT

Awareness on Mobile Tower Frauds

To serve the public interest, we creatively presented pertinent information regarding recurring incidents of fraud involving Mobile Towers through advisories, aiming to raise awareness among the populace.

Stay cautious of unauthorized tower frauds happening in the telecom industry. DoT does not issue any NOC for the installation of a mobile tower.

#TowerFraud #Telecom #FraudPrevention



Watch out for mobile #TowerFrauds!

@DoT_India and @TRAI clearly specify that neither DoT or TRAI nor TSPs or IP-1s asks for money to install mobile towers in your property and asks citizens to be cautious not to fall for any such scam.

@PIB_India @devusinh @neerajmittalias



Ministry of Communications has issued guidelines amidst tower frauds to aware the public about the guidelines related to mobile tower installations.

#towerfrauds #noobjectioncertificate #MinistryofCommunication



Don't let fraudsters fool you!

Mobile tower #frauds can empty your pockets and compromise your security. Remember, executives of Telecom Service Providers, @TRAI and @DoT_India, never ask for upfront payments in the form of security deposits to install mobile #towers at your premises.

Be vigilant, stay safe!



Issue of Illegal Signal Boosters/Repeaters

Multiple advisories were issued informing the digital audience about the detrimental effects of illegal boosters/repeaters and the consequences associated with their illegal possession, use and sale.

Are you using signal boosters?
Be cautious, [#SignalBoosters](#) downgrade the network quality leading to call drops and high latency. Sale, purchase or possession of signal boosters is an [#illegal](#) and punishable offence.
[#SayNoToSignalBoosters](#)

@DotWmo @DoT_India @NBM_DoT



Using or selling signal boosters is a punishable offence, with hefty fines from the Wireless Monitoring Organization (WMO).

SAY NO TO SIGNAL BOOSTERS

Illegal [#SignalBoosters](#) are nothing but an invitation for network disruptions and installing them may bring legal action. Refrain from being tempted by the allure of signal boosters.
[@DoT_India](#) [@TRAI](#)



Illegal Signal Boosters:
A Recipe for Network Trouble & Legal Action

Signal Boosters interfere with the networks and lead to call drops, low data speed, etc.

Using signal boosters is illegal and can attract heavy penalties.

Say No To Signal Boosters!
Network issues, call drops, high latency, etc. are the results of using illegal signal boosters + heavy penalties from Wireless Monitoring Organizations (WMO).
Be aware and don't fall for false claims!
[@DoT_India](#) [@TRAI](#) [@PIB_India](#)



DID YOU KNOW?
As per the Indian Telegraph Act and Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, use of any unlicensed wireless equipment, including **signal boosters** is **illegal and heavy penalties can be imposed** by WMO (Wireless Monitoring Organization).

Problems caused by illegal Signal Boosters

Interference
It disrupts airwaves, potentially distorting mobile signals for nearby customers.

Network Instability
It is the main reason for network issues like signal fluctuations, call drops, failures, high latency, and low data speeds.

SAY NO TO SIGNAL BOOSTERS

Unauthorised signal [#boosters](#) not only violate laws, but also put legitimate emergency services at risk by causing [#signal](#) interference as well as hamper the network for those in your vicinity!
Protect yourself and others by saying NO to illegal signal boosters/repeaters!



Are you involved in possessing/selling illegal signal boosters/repeaters?
Beware! It's an offence!

Cyber Security

Through consistent infographics, warnings, updates and solutions regarding cyber threats, the digital platform endeavors to ensure the audience remains secure and well-informed.


Stay alert, stay secure!
 @DoT_India has issued a warning to millions of #telecom users regarding the '#CallForwardingScam.' It advises caution against calls instructing individuals to dial '*401#' followed by an unknown number, as it may pose a risk of potential fraud.
 @TRAI @DigitalIndia @reliancejio @airtelindia @Vodafone_NEWS

Advisory Notice COAI

Call Forwarding Scam

Issued by Department of Telecommunications (DoT)

DoT has issued an advisory to alert mobile users about the 'Call Forwarding scam.'



0:08 / 1:00

Don't let scammers catch you off guard! Stay one step ahead by being cautious about KYC fraud. Your personal information is valuable, so double-check and verify requests before sharing any sensitive data.
 #StayAlert #KYCFrauds #BeCautious


Beware of KYC Frauds COAI



- Do not fall for Smishing or SMS Fishing
- Do not share any personal/bank details
- Do not share any CVV or OTP
- Do not download any remote assistance app
- Do not attend unsolicited (calls/SMSs/emails)

Dive into the intricate landscape of cybersecurity 🧐
 Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar @DGCOAI in an article discusses the rise in tech & the demand for a proactive approach to build a robust digital future & also to educate end-users to combat cybercrime @voicendata_ voicendata.com/navigating-the...

COAI



The rise of digital technologies such as edge computing, blockchain, Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital tokens, and the Internet of Things (IoT) has led to an unprecedented increase in data generation, necessitating robust data management and security strategies. End-users are the first line of defence and educating them about common threats like phishing, malware and social engineering tactics is crucial.

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI

Stay informed about the #QuishingScam, where scammers use malicious QR codes to redirect users to unethical sites, risking personal data and money. #ThinkBeforeYouClick #CyberSecurity
 @DigitalIndia @DoT_India @NPCI_NPCI @UPI_NPCI

QUISHING SCAM COAI

A NEW TYPE OF CYBER FRAUD INVOLVING FRAUDULENT QR CODES.

What is it?



- Scammers place malicious QR codes on surfaces like flyers, ads, etc.
- Scanning these fake codes redirects users to phishing websites.
- Tricks users into entering their personal or bank details, which scammers steal.

Government Initiatives, Policies & Reports

Regular updates and announcements regarding Telecom-related policies, reports and developments by the Government have been amplified through tweets and creative illustrations to debunk myths and enhance understanding of the topic.

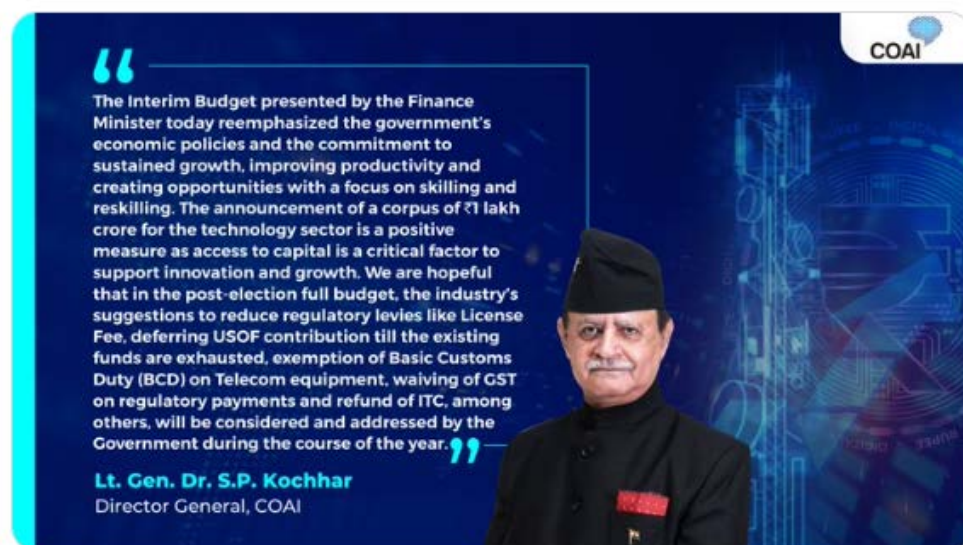


Union Budget - 2024

COAI's recommendations and views representing the Indian telecom sector were presented on social media in various formats, including quotes and publications, both before and after the announcement.

Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI : The [#InterimBudget](#) 2024 presented today, reemphasizes the government's commitment to sustained growth, improving productivity and creating opportunities. We remain optimistic that the requests from the telecom sector will be considered in the upcoming full-budget.

[#Budget2024](#) [#ViksitBharatBudget](#)



With a positive outlook on India's digital future, COAI, representing Indian telcos, has put forth pre-budget '24 recommendations focusing on imp. industry needs like license fee, custom duty, USOF, etc. to unlock the sector's full potential.[@businessline](#)



Technological Advancements

Creative content and articles on next-gen technology and advancements in the telecom sector have been amplified to ensure that the digital audience stays updated on the latest sectoral developments.

#5G: An era of efficiency where industries will thrive on the potential of seamless connectivity, cloud computing, automation, and real-time data!

It is indeed the enabler for **#Industry 4.0**!

5G for Industry 4.0

5G will deliver an array of innovative use cases to increase factory capabilities and boost agility, freeing operations from wire-dependency

Source: Ericsson



Get ready for the edge: Global operators & vendors overwhelmingly agree, with 70% upping their investments in edge infrastructure in 2024. **#EdgeComputing #Cloud**

EDGE COMPUTING

Edge computing brings processing and storage capabilities closer to the data source, reducing latency and enhancing real-time data processing.



70% of operators & telco vendors globally are ramping up spending in 2024 on edge compute infrastructure in comparison to 2023

Source: GSMA Intelligence

Read Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, [@DGCOAI](#)'s article on the importance of interference-free spectrum coexistence for unlocking the full potential of wireless comm. technologies & deployment of next-gen services like **#5G**, **#6G**, IoT, & beyond. Know more: [@voicendata_](#)



From voicendata.com

Check out this insightful article by Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, [@DGCOAI](#) published in [@voicendata_](#) on the Network as a Service (NaaS). He focuses on why **#NaaS** is crucial for new gen networks, its relation to **#5G** & future prospects. **#telecom**

Read to know more:



From voicendata.com

India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2023

The India Mobile Congress 2023, organized by the Department of Telecom (DoT) and COAI, was effectively promoted across social media platforms to keep the audience informed about the latest updates along with a collaborated post-event teaser video for the same.

Get some glimpses of the largest digital technology forum in Asia, India Mobile Congress @exploreIMC 2023 (7th Edition), jointly organized by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) @DoT_India and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) conducted from 27th – 29th October, 2023 and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi @PMOIndia at the Bharat Mandapam in the presence of over 7000 plus people. IMC has established itself as a leading platform for bringing together the industry, Government, academia, and other ecosystem players, to discuss and display the latest in the technology world.

Watch the full video here: youtu.be/r9XHRXBIXyc?si=.....

@reliancejio @airtelnews @VodafoneGroup @AdityaBirlaGrp @GSMA @Fortinet



Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, DGCOAI, shares his views at "Spectrum Economics & Policy for a Digital tomorrow" session at IMC '23 ~ "The end goal that Govt. of India, operators and any body desire is to bring the best telecom service at the worst geographically located area & at the most affordable rates so that the citizens of the country get it in the cheapest manner. And Indian networks are by far the best networks in the world." #IMC2023 #IMC

@exploreIMC
@DoT_India



Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi awarded 100 5G labs for nation-building at the inauguration ceremony of IMC '23.

#IMC2023 #GlobalInnovationAtIMC #PMAAtIMC2023

@PMOIndia @exploreIMC @DoT_India

@narendramodi



On behalf of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), Lieutenant General Dr. SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI, sends his warmest regards on the successfully progressing event of India Mobile Congress 2023 on Day 2.

@exploreIMC @DoT_India

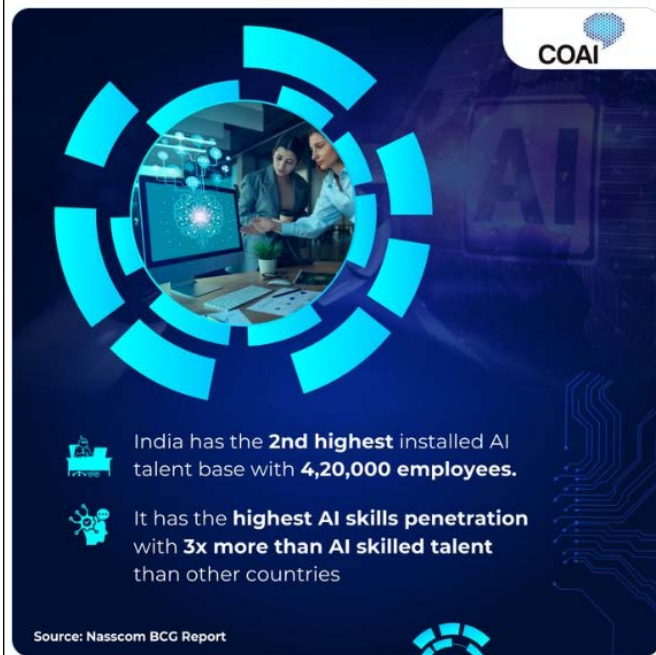
#imc #imc23 #day2



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Updates and opportunities regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) have been well promoted through digital channels, along with articles featuring DG's insights.

India boasts the second-highest installed **#AI** talent base globally, with 420,000 skilled employees, showcasing the nation's leadership in AI expertise. With the highest AI skills penetration and three times more AI skilled talent than other countries, India emerges as a powerhouse in the global AI landscape.



The Indian **#AI** market is poised for exponential growth, projected to soar to approximately \$17 billion by 2027, driven by a robust compound annual growth rate of 25-35%. This surge reflects India's escalating investment and adoption of AI technologies, promising transformative impacts across various sectors.

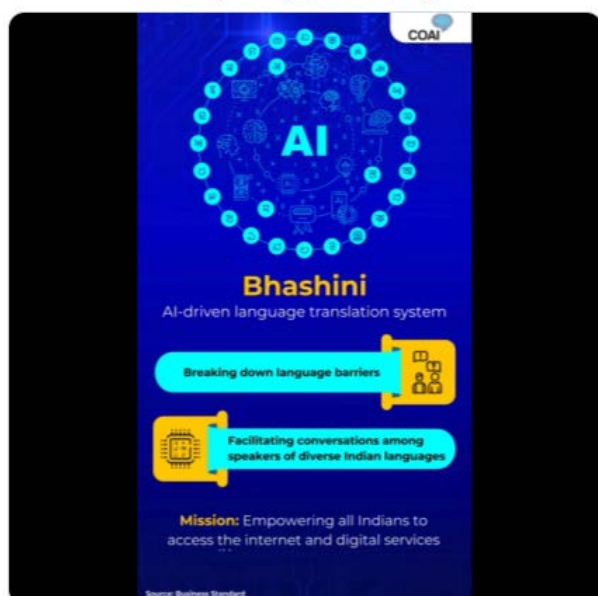
@DoT_India @_DigitalIndia @Inc42



Let's join hands to build a strong digitally connected world by breaking the language barriers!

The Government of India has launched **#bhashini**, an **#AI** -driven language translation system, breaks down Indian language barriers for easy conversations. Accessible via Android and iOS apps or bhashini.gov.in portal.

@AshwiniVaishnav @DoT_India @_DigitalIndia @mygovindia



AI: Shaping the next chapter of India's economic story. It is set to revolutionize key sectors of India's digital economy, unlocking unprecedented growth.

#AI #DigitalEconomy #FutureofAI #ViksitBharat
@Rajeev_Gol



Fair-share Issue

The fair-share issue has been actively addressed on social media platforms, with article links promoted to enhance engagement and reach a broader audience.

When the shoe pinches!!

“It is clearly visible that when the TSPs are looking for a [#fairshare](#) mechanism for LTGs to contribute to the rising network costs, the LTGs are oblivious to the [#TSPs](#)’ requirements. But, as evident from the recent application store debacle, when it comes to the [#LTGs](#) earnings, they are highly concerned when the shoe pinches them and refuse to compromise with their financial gains. It is ironical that the LTGs, which are displaying insensitivity to the Indian startups by excluding them on pure monetary basis, have been blaming the telcos of trying to stifle innovation by proposing the fair-share charge, which is misleading and contrary to the approach taken by the telcos to exempt [#Startups](#), [#MSMEs](#) and smaller players from paying the fair-share charge – with the clear objective to foster innovation, encourage entrepreneurship and support the vital startup ecosystem of the country.”

[@DoT_India](#) [@TRAI](#)

telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/amp/news/mvas-...

Lt Gen Dr. SP Kocchar, [@DGCOAI](#) clarifies that the fair-share proposal is actually designed to benefit startups and MSMEs, and not curbing their growth as proposed in the misleading letter.

[@TRAI](#) [@DoT_India](#)

Read more:



From theprint.in

Don't be misled by false information being shared on the fair-share proposal. COAI has made it clear that the proposal does not target startups or MSMEs, and that it does not violate net neutrality principles.

[@TRAI](#) [@DoT_India](#)

Read more:



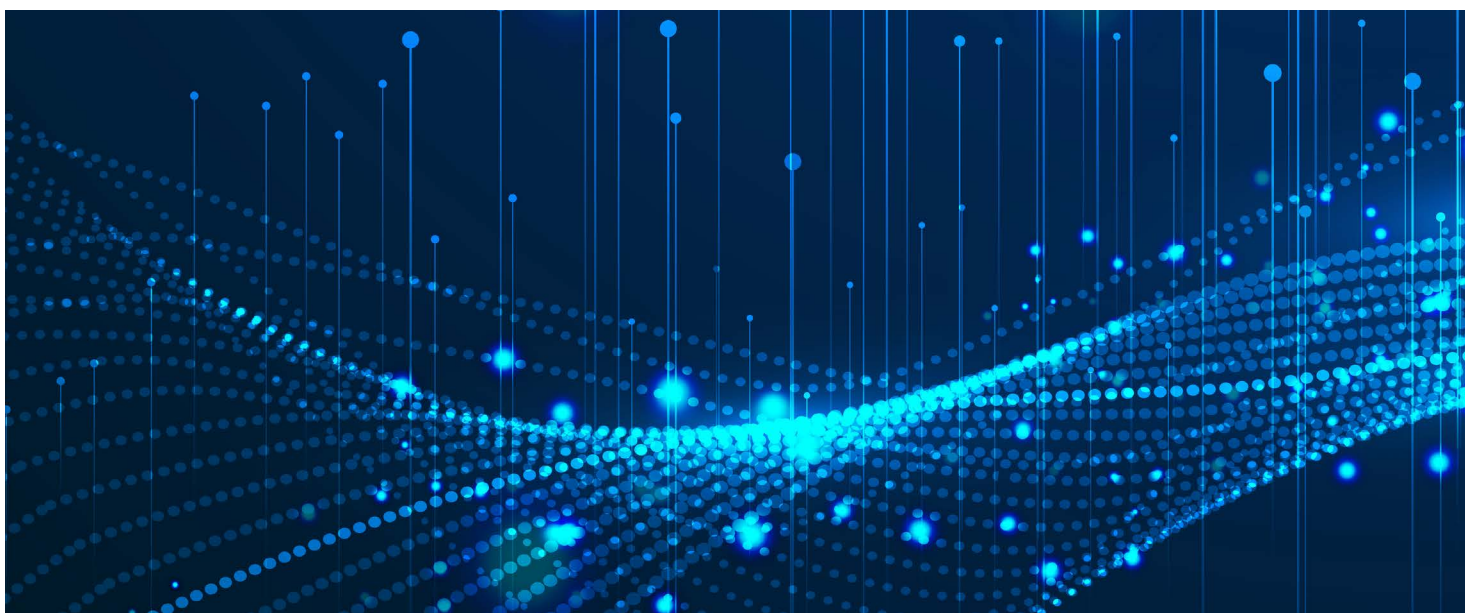
From telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com

With increasing rise in data traffic from Large Traffic Generators (LTGs), global concerns are growing. Explore [@jaijit](#)'s insightful take on adopting the internet's funding structure for LTGs to strengthen India's telecom sector.

Read more: [@ET_Government](#)



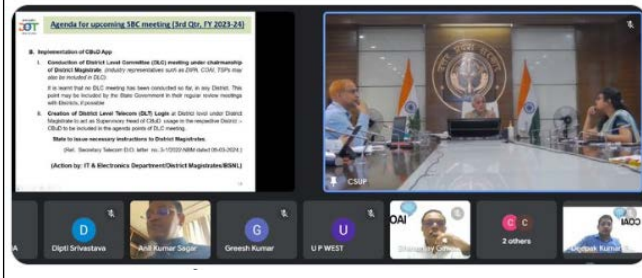
From government.economictimes.indiatimes.com



Gati Shakti & State Broadband Committee Meetings

Updates on Gati Shakti discussions and State Broadband Committee meetings with various Indian States/UTs have been shared on social media handles for the digital audience.

COAI thanks Shri Durga Shankar Mishra, IAS (Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh) and UP LSA for conducting the State Broadband Committee meeting today. Decisions taken during the meeting will help boost telecom infrastructure in the State, including #5G network.
#GovtofUttarPradesh #NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



COAI thanks Sh. Puneet Kumar Goel, IAS Chief Secretary, Government of Goa for chairing and DoT LSA Maharashtra (@MaharashtraLSA) for organizing the 3rd State Broadband Committee meeting held today. The deliberations held during the meeting will ensure steady and effective deployment of telecom infrastructure in the state.



COAI thanks Shri Durga Shankar Mishra, IAS (Chief Secretary, UP) and UP LSA for conducting the State Broadband Committee meeting today. Deliberations held during the meeting will boost #telecom infra including #5G network.
#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



COAI thanks Shri Raj Kumar, IAS (Chief Secretary, Gujarat) and Gujarat LSA for organizing the 2nd SBC meeting of the FY 2023-24. Deliberations held during the meeting will ensure robust Telecom Infrastructure in the state.
#DigitalIndia #GatiShakti #NationalBroadbandMission



Spectrum Related

DG’s authored articles on the spectrum series, along with others - covering advancements and requirements of spectrum, have been effectively highlighted to raise awareness.

Gain insights into use of spectrum by consumers, industries & #govt. & the need for adequate spectrum, particularly #6GHz band in #5G era for #India's digital future
Read more in COAI Knowledge series on #Spectrum @ETTelecom by Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar @DGCOAI



Utilisation and need for adequate spectrum - ET Telecom

From telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com

COAI @ConnectCOAI

The electromagnetic spectrum is a valuable asset widely used in diverse technologies & industries. Discover its different uses across various sectors in India under COAI Knowledge Series on #Spectrum in @ETTelecom by Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar @DGCOAI

Read more



telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com
Use of spectrum in different technologies and verticals - ET
Uses Of Spectrum: "The Indian scenario, with its unique challenges and opportunities, reflects a microcosm of the ...

Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar @DGCOAI stresses on the need for at least #2GHz spectrum in mid-band for better #5G coverage which can be achieved by identifying #6GHz frequency band for IMT. Via @MuntazirAbbas @ETTelecom @DoT_India @TRAI

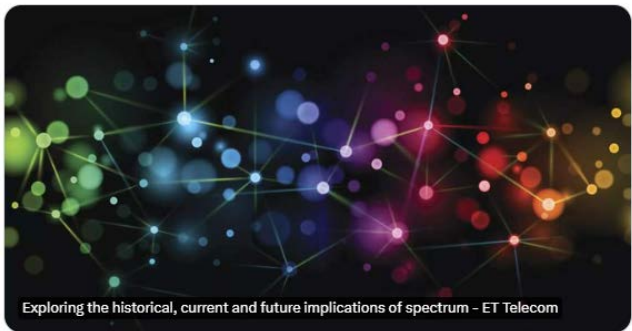


Telcos need 2 GHz spectrum for better 5G coverage: Industry group - ET Telecom

From telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com

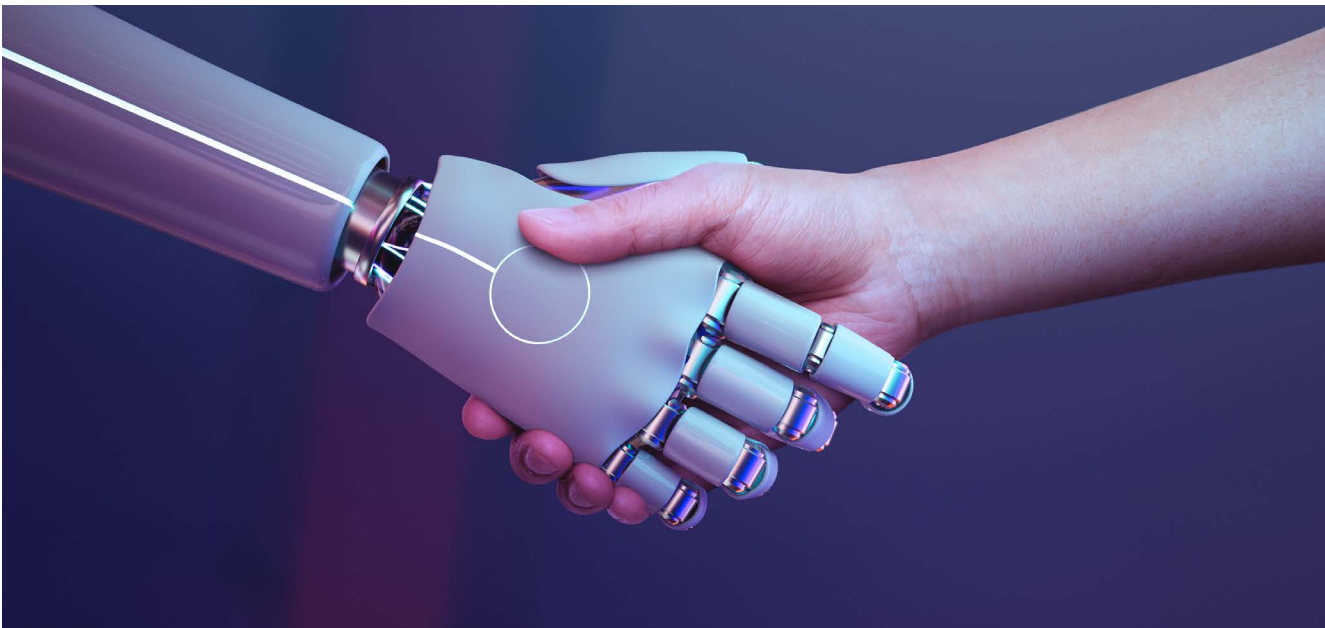
In the latest article of COAI Knowledge Series on #Spectrum in @ETTelecom , Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI delves into Spectrum's journey, exploring the past, present & future of this invisible yet vital resource to shape our digital landscape.

Read more :



Exploring the historical, current and future implications of spectrum - ET Telecom

From telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com



Events

Events participated in by COAI have been comprehensively covered, including live tweets and posts shared with the digital audience for latest updates.

Lt. Gen Dr. SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI, shared at the Right to Excellence Tech Summit 2023 by @timesofindia: "Monetizing 5G will rely on a variety of apps, not solely a 'killer app.' High-quality networks are essential to harness #5G's potential. Collaboration and cost-sharing among stakeholders are imperative. As we move towards 6G, with even more advanced applications looming, it's crucial to commence app development early for global leadership." #NextGenConnectivity #5GInnovation #techsummit2023 #righttoexcellence



"All the odd Gs which have come, 1G, 3G and for 5G we are going through the process, had been areas where we are trying to formulate new technologies, find new applications and new monetization areas. But we have not really monetized the odd Gs, where we have monetized and where we have matured are the even Gs. So, I see, 5G as a precursor for 6G."

~ Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI at the 7th edition of @ETTelecom's #ET5G6GCongress on an insightful discussion on '6G: A Real Opportunity for India to Shape the Global Standards Framework'.



During the @voicendata Telecom Leadership Forum 5G+, Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI, delivered a powerful message that with every data point, our carbon footprint and costs rise. This underscores the paramount importance of prioritizing green solutions. Let's make sustainability central to our digital journey! #GreenTech #DataImpact #Sustainability #TelecomIndustry

@airtelindia
@reliancejio
@ViBusinessIndia

#COAI thanks Sh. Durga Shanker Mishra, IAS, @ChiefSecyUP, for gracing the "Capacity Building Conference on #5G." Today's conference will support in enabling smooth roll-out of 5G in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

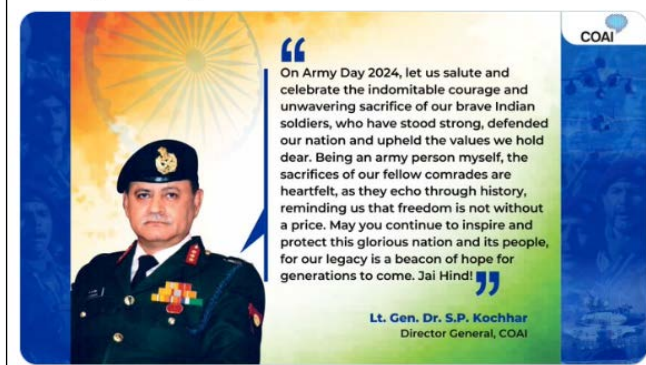


Festival & Celebrations

Engaging and informative content posts for festivals and celebration of significant days pertinent to the telecom sector have been widely shared across social media platforms, fostering community engagement and awareness.



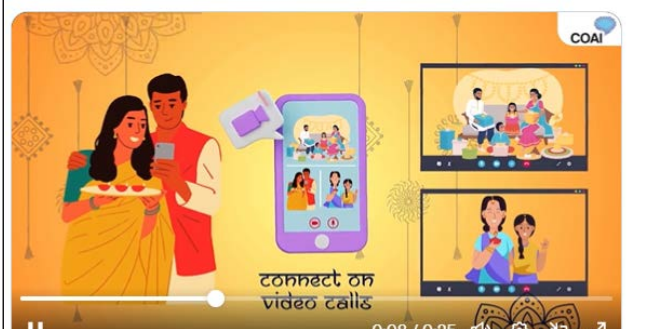
Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, @DGCOAI, an army veteran himself, amplifies the nation's gratitude to the #IndianArmy on #ArmyDay. He conveys his best wishes to our valiant soldiers whose courage in the face of adversity, unfaltering commitment & selfless service unite us as a nation.



This #Diwali, let's celebrate the seamless connections that keep us together, like the unwavering strength of our networks that bridge distances and connect hearts.

COAI wishes you all a very [#HappyDiwali](#)

#HappyDiwali2023 #DigitalIndia #शुभ_दीपावली



This Dussehra, let's pledge to work together to 'Conquer the Challenges in Telecom Sector' and build a better telecom future for India.

#Dussehra #BetterTelecomForIndia #GoodOverEvil



10 MEDIA VISIBILITY SNAPSHOT



DoT, TRAI, power ministry's continued support driving adoption of Green Open Access by states: COAI

In addition to being a key enabler of India's economic growth and prosperity, the "essential infrastructure sector" has clear objectives to shift progressively towards renewable and green energy use to support the nation's carbon reduction goals and sustainability efforts, Kochhar said.



ETTelecom
Published On Nov 28, 2023 at 02:08 PM IST

Read by:
919 Industry Professionals



NEW DELHI: Due to the continued support from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and the Ministry of Power, the adoption of Green Open Access rules has started to rise in various states of the country, the Cellular



24TH ANNIVERSARY



Connectivity for All

Telecom initiatives to bridge the digital divide

Lt Gen. Dr S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI

In the dynamic landscape of India's telecommunications sector, the year 2023 marked a momentous period characterised by transformative initiatives, particularly the nationwide roll-out of 5G. Lauded as the fastest in the world, this strategic deployment, coupled with progressive government policies, has firmly positioned India as a global leader in the ongoing 5G revolution.

As of October 2023, the subscriber base for telecom services in India reached an impressive 1.82 billion, making it the second largest in the world. This substantial expansion underscores the growing significance of information and communication technology. Notably, the average data usage per subscriber surged to 18.4 GB in June 2023, reflecting the increasing reliance on telecom services in the country.

Progressions towards a sustainable telecom ecosystem
The telecom landscape in India witnessed

a significant stride forward with the Telecommunications Act, 2023 receiving the assent of the President in December 2023. This comprehensive legislative measure places strong emphasis on fostering robust telecom networks, as evidenced by the well-defined chapter on right of way (RoW). The act ensures the granting of RoW in a non-discriminatory manner, coupled with a clear directive that exempts this network from tax, levy, cess, fees or duties on the associated property. A notable provision is the prevention of coercive actions, such as sealing or shutdowns without due permission from the central government. These positive measures are poised to enhance the connectivity of Indians, ensuring a resilient digital network that spans the entire country. The act also demonstrates a commendable focus on clarifications and penalties. By introducing proportionality and nexus with the nature of the offence, it establishes a considered and rational approach to

penalties. This progressive step not only enhances industry confidence but also contributes to the ease of doing business.

A significant regulatory shift is the replacement of the term "licence" with "authorisation" in the legislation. This modification aims to simplify the overall regulatory landscape for telecom services, bringing clarity to the authorisation requirements for providing telecommunication services. Furthermore, it also incorporates stringent provisions to address the unlawful interception of messages or unauthorised access, thereby bolstering national security. Notably, it places the authority to authorise internet shutdowns exclusively in the hands of the central government. This approach ensures continued, uninterrupted and seamless telecom connectivity for all, aligning with the broader goal of building a robust and inclusive digital infrastructure across the nation.

In 2023, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) took proactive



72

tele.net | January 2024

Difficult to Provide State-wise Quality of Service Data: Telcos

Kiran.Rathe@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: New Delhi: Telecom operators have said it would be difficult for them to provide quality of service (QoS) data state-wise or district-wise as sought by the regulator Trai because it comes under different jurisdictions for different licensed service areas (LSA). Further, there will be difficulties in aggregation and coordination of data as it will require a new ID system set up that will entail cost and time.

Carriers also want the government to set aside mid band 6 GHz spectrum for them, saying it is critical for proliferation of 5G services, and delicensing the spectrum would lead to loss to exchequer and will also impact quality and cost of next generation services. Tech companies though have also laid claim to the band, saying it can be used to propagate alternative unlicensed technologies such as WiFi-6, which can support 5G-like speeds of nearly 10 Gbps.

In a bid to check deteriorating QoS, particularly call drops, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had asked the telecom operators to submit data around network outages in any district or state to it because it adversely affects QoS and consumer experience. The regulator is also

considering bringing suitable regulations in this regard. Currently QoS parameters are checked LSA-wise and telcos also submit data LSA-wise. But the authority feels that the current system is somehow not working at its best and on various occasions, the outages at any particular district or areas go unnoticed because the down time is averaged out in the whole LSA data.

To check that, Trai said, telcos should plan and implement systems for online data collection for QoS benchmarks and their processing to generate performance reports with LSA, state level or lower granularity. Further, all the operators were asked to provide reports on network outages to Trai in any district or state.

But the telcos feel it would be difficult to implement and industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has

written to Trai to reconsider the mandate.

"So, while what we have been told is a laudable cause, we support giving the best services to the subscribers with whatever it takes. But the point is that the roll out and the monitoring of the telecom services has been done LSA-wise and all reporting hinges on that," COAI DG SP Kochhar said. "Now, if you introduce geographical boundaries of a state or a district, then there will be difficulty because it comes under different jurisdictions for different LSAs."

He added that there would be problems in coordination and aggregation of data as a new ID system has to be set up, which will entail cost and time. "Therefore, we have suggested to Trai to reconsider and make it LSA-wise that serves the same purpose," he added.

During a meeting with telcos on February 17, Trai had directed them to take urgent steps to ensure improvement in QoS while ensuring that the roll out of 5G services did not affect the existing telecom services in the country.

Telecom operators are staking claim to 6 GHz spectrum as current airwaves in the mid band is "woefully short of requirement" of telcos for rolling out 5G services. A 100, 6 GHz, with its propagation qualities, will be ideal for densely populated areas, especially urban locations.

CURBING CALL DROPS

Trai had asked the telecom operators to submit data around network outages to check deteriorating QoS



Spectrum in 6 GHz band key to 5G growth: COAI

FE BUREAU

New Delhi, April 10

AS THE GOVERNMENT'S vision document on 6G includes recommendation for delicensing part of the 6 GHz band for Wi-Fi, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has reiterated its demand to allocate the spectrum for mobile networks. The association argues that the spectrum will help them provide better 5G services at reasonable costs.

"Mid-bands like 6 GHz provide a balance of wide coverage and capacity which is critical to the rapid and cost-efficient deployments of 5G mobile networks in India & also meets the

exponentially increasing data demands that too at affordable terms," SP Kochhar, director general of COAI, said in a letter dated April 7, to telecom secretary K Rajaraman. The association said the shortage of 6 GHz spectrum would compel the telecom operators to densify networks or increase network capacity to meet 5G performance requirements, thereby leading to 60% higher annual costs. Without densification, 5G download speeds would be reduced to 50% if less spectrum is allocated in 6 GHz band, the association said, adding that the entire 6 GHz band which includes 59.25-71.25 GHz frequency should be allocated for mobile services.

Amended RoW Rules 2023 to expedite 5G deployment in India: COAI

The centre has directed that no fees will be charged by the appropriate authority for this temporary setup.

Written by PTI

August 18, 2023 18:11 IST



Jio's Mittal Set to Continue as COAI Chief

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Reliance Jio president Pramod K Mittal will continue as the chairperson of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) while chief regulatory officer of Vodafone Idea, P Balaji will be the vice chairperson for FY2024.

The apex industry body representing telecom operators in India announced the leadership changes at its annual general body meeting for the financial year 2022-23 held Wednesday.

"Among many challenges as well as opportunities, the telecom industry stood resilient and continued to serve the nation as an essential service, delivering digital connectivity to individuals, businesses and various other sectors of the economy," SP Kochhar, director general, COAI, said in a statement. "COAI is optimistic about the opportunities that lie ahead for the industry, particularly as India advances with 5G and allied technologies," he added.

COAI Bats for Industrial Tariff Rates for Telecom Infra

NEW DELHI: Telcos' body COAI has made a strong plea that the telecom sector be charged industrial tariffs for electricity and not commercial rates, and that power connections be expeditiously provided to telecom infrastructure facilities. It said doing so was important given the essential nature of services and socio-economic benefits that accrue across multiple sectors from faster 5G deployments. COAI — whose members include telecom operators like Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea — has also batted for the sector to be provided uninterrupted 24x7 power supply.

"Telecom is an infrastructure industry, but we are still being charged at commercial rates for power. So we don't get the benefits," SP Kochhar, director general of COAI told PTI. COAI has demanded that telecom infrastructure be charged at industrial and not commercial rates for electricity. Today, most states provide electricity on commercial tariff rate to telecom industry, placing it in one of the highest brackets of power tariffs. While telecom tariffs in India are the lowest, the electricity tariffs are being charged to the industry at substantially higher rates under the commercial category, COAI rued. — PTI

Understanding Fair Share: Why contribution from OTTs is critical?

By Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General, COAI



The Indian telecom sector's proposal for a fair-share contribution from Over-the-Top (OTT) services to support network expenses and expansion has ignited a heated debate. While differing views have emerged, here's an attempt to clearly articulate the concept of fair-share and its rationale, while debunking some popular misconceptions.

Let's draw an analogy between constructing a building and creating & operating telecom networks. The cost of land for a building is akin to the entry and license fees paid by telecom companies. Constructing the building is similar to building a network and acquiring spectrum. Building operation costs include electricity, water, maintenance and sanitation, while in telecom, it encompasses running a network in all its aspects, including technology refresh/updates.

In both cases, the recovery of the investments/costs is achieved through rent for a building and revenue from services for telecom networks. If an occupant of a building (or a user of a network) sits on top for free, e.g., OTT, and doesn't contribute to land/building/network costs by refusing to pay rent or for maintenance or upgrades while benefiting directly from the property/network, the building or network becomes a non-profitable enterprise for the owner, even though profits accrue to the free occupant who cannot conduct his/her business without the building/network.

The fallacious argument that revenue is accrued when OTTs drive subscribers to the telecom networks is ill-founded. A fact is that the bandwidth-heavy services offered by OTTs lead to increased network traffic, necessitating further upgrades and capacity enhancement. Similarly, the business activities of unauthorised building occupants lead to ongoing strengthening and expansion costs, alongside rising operational expenses. In India, with its low tariff rates and Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), the added traffic from OTTs does not offset the substantial investments made by TSPs.

It is often argued that TSPs could always hike their tariffs to make up for the required revenues. But that is not the intent of this sector, which is committed to facilitating the national goal of Digital India and fulfilling the 'Right to Internet' for all Indian citizens. Therefore, the focus of the TSPs would be on applications and services. While the significant 5G investments by TSPs are being taken for granted, the nation aims for leadership in advanced technologies like 6G, which will demand more bandwidth, increasing network pressures and investment needs. For TSPs to invest further, they need fair returns. The Indian telecom sector, which positioned the nation on the global digital map, has provided affordable digital connectivity across the country and introduced advanced technologies like 5G.

It is imperative that responsible contributions are needed from all stakeholders in the digital ecosystem to ensure the continued progress of our digital ambitions. We hope for a greater sense of holistic development and benefits for all to take centre stage in this matter, looking forward to similar initiatives in the Indian market.

Fair-share charge on OTTs will not violate net neutrality: COAI

The proposed fair-share charge to be levied on over-the-top (OTT) service providers will not violate net neutrality allegations around the same seek to misguide and confuse people, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said on Wednesday. Taking on claims made by telecom and startup players, the industry body also stressed that telecom service providers are not in favor of extending the charge to startups, and small businesses, instead seeking compensation only from large traffic generating (LTG) OTTs.

"Contrary to the misguided opinions being floated in various forums, all of the concerns being raised such as favouring one website/application/service, pricing differentiation, decision on charging fair share on a case-to-case basis are imagined and speculative scenarios," COAI Director General SP Kochhar said in a statement. Representing the three private telecom service providers (TSPs) Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, COAI had earlier suggested levying a licensing fee of 8 per cent on OTTs on a recurring basis.

TSPs have claimed the charge is necessary for the development, upkeep and sustenance of robust and quality telecom networks across the country, as colossal traffic is being loaded on the networks as data demands grow steadily.

SUBHANYA CHAKRABORTY

LT GEN DR S P KOCHHAR

THE TRIPLE 'A' STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS

Affordability, accessibility and technological advancements are the critical aspects that India needs to take care of in its digital mission journey.

In the rapidly evolving digital arena, India stands as a trailblazer. With its digital mission, spearheaded by the ambitious Digital India initiative, the nation has set its sights on a digital future. The COAI President demonstrated the indispensable role of telecom networks in this journey. He highlighted the need for a robust digital infrastructure, encompassing connectivity, security, and innovation. The COAI President also stressed the importance of digital literacy, urging citizens to embrace digital tools and services. He emphasized the need for a digital ecosystem that fosters growth, innovation, and inclusivity. The COAI President also highlighted the need for a digital ecosystem that fosters growth, innovation, and inclusivity.

The digital ecosystem is a complex one, requiring a multi-pronged approach. It involves not just infrastructure development, but also policy-making, regulatory frameworks, and a focus on digital literacy. The COAI President stressed the need for a holistic approach, one that addresses all these aspects. He called for a digital ecosystem that is not just technologically advanced, but also one that is inclusive and sustainable. He emphasized the need for a digital ecosystem that fosters growth, innovation, and inclusivity.

As India charts its digital path, the nation faces challenges, but also immense opportunities. The COAI President stressed the need for a digital ecosystem that is not just technologically advanced, but also one that is inclusive and sustainable. He called for a digital ecosystem that fosters growth, innovation, and inclusivity.

The government must explore options to make 5G infrastructure deployment more cost-effective, easing the financial burden

INSIGHT

Women in tech - Bridging the gender gap towards excellence

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar | Director General | COAI

Sheryl Sandberg, the former COO of Meta Platforms, once remarked, "The worst barrier when it comes to something always comes with a lot of people. It's not just a barrier, it's a female surgeon — as if the gender implies surprise. One day there will not be female leaders. There will just be leaders." This statement underscores the prevailing surprise associated with women in leadership roles, especially in the tech industry.

Globally, women remain under-represented in decision-making positions. Yet, their participation is not merely a matter of rights; it is pivotal for sustainable development. Engaging both genders in decision-making fosters creativity, innovation, and broadens the talent pool. Research indicates that diverse workplaces outperform their homogeneous counterparts, emphasising the importance of gender diversity for innovation and global competitiveness.

Recent years have witnessed a remarkable increase in the representation of women in tech. For instance, 34 percent of IT professionals in India are women, predominantly under the age of 30. Furthermore, India is nearing a balanced gender ratio among STEM graduates. Such studies are encouraging, but there is still a long road ahead.

Studies by the Boston Consulting Group reveal that women-led businesses yield higher returns on investment, compared to those led by men. When startups helmed by women secure funding, they tend to employ 2.5 times more women than men. These businesses often prioritise social contributions and foster positive employee relationships.

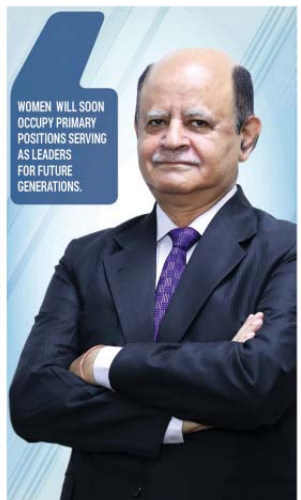
The e-commerce sector has emerged as a potent platform for women entrepreneurs. Notable names include Haris Vaidyanathan (Founder & CEO, Earth Rhythms), Naam Leon (Founder & Director, Rapid Delivery), and Michelle Lau (Founder & CEO, ChaiNShe). Platforms like Etsy have further empowered women, with 83 percent of its sellers identifying as female.

India's national development objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Aatmanirbhar India, which are our development goals, are closely aligned with the need for a robust digital infrastructure. The COAI President stressed the need for a digital ecosystem that fosters growth, innovation, and inclusivity.

Affordability, Accessibility, Advancements In its report on the connected world, IHS Markit emphasized the need for a digital ecosystem that fosters growth, innovation, and inclusivity.

The government must explore options to make 5G infrastructure deployment more cost-effective, easing the financial burden

October 28, 2023 7



WOMEN WILL SOON OCCUPY PRIMARY POSITIONS SERVING AS LEADERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

female participation to foster financial literacy among women. Under India's G20 Presidency, a dedicated G20 Empower Working Group on Corporate Women Empowerment is in the works to focus on accelerating advancement of women in the private sector to drive global economic growth and transformative progress for the world economy. The success of flagship programs, like Chandrasekhar, Ogasawara, and the Mars Mission is also attributed to the talent and dedication of women scientists.

We can, at this juncture, be confident that the momentum is building towards a gender-equal tech environment. The goal is clear — to foster an unbiased ecosystem where women occupy primary positions, serving as role models and leaders for future generations. ■



For India to lead in 6G, youngsters need to create applications: COAI DG

"We have to build international standard 6G infrastructure and the standardisation work has started with a bang... the road map has been laid out and the government is taking the lead, with support from the industry," Kocchar said.



PTI

Updated On Oct 28, 2023 at 08:01 AM IST

Read by:

583 Industry Professionals



Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). (Image via @TRAI on Twitter)

Telcos welcome TRAI's recommendations to improve infra in N-E States

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Telecom service providers (TSPs) have welcomed recommendations made by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) that re-emphasise some of the industry's long-standing demands which included improving infrastructure in the north-eastern States.

"The industry is confident that if implemented in letter and spirit, these progressive recommendations will provide further impetus to proliferation of telecom and broadband services in the North-East region of the country, thus propelling socio-economic and digital progress for the citizens," SP Kochhar, Director General at Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), said.

COAI represents major TSPs including Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea.

MOBILE TOWERS

TRAI had last week released recommendations on 'Improving Telecom Infrastruc-

ture in Northeastern States of India' wherein it recommended for facilitating creation of enabling provisions in their policy to expedite accord of environmental clearance to TSPs for installing mobile towers and DG sets for tower locations.

Also, urged the State governments to provide electricity to telecom sites as a priority (within 15 days of connections request) at utility/ industrial tariff, and waiving off or subsidising last-mile installation charges for extending electricity connection to telecom sites in remote and hilly areas.

The Authority had also released a separate recommendation on 'Promoting Networking and Telecom Equipment Manufacturing in India' that included facilitating local value addition in participation with cross country value chains and exports from India.

It also recommended emphasis on "Telecom software" as a separate product line in accordance with contemporary softwareisation of network elements in new generation networks.

Telcos Spent ₹10,000 crore Extra to Support Large Apps: COAI

PTI

New Delhi: Telecom operators are estimated to have spent an additional ₹10,000 crore in 2022-23 to support traffic generated by large entertainment and communication apps, according to an estimate of telecom industry body COAI.

Cellular Operators Association of India director general SP Kochhar told PTI that the infrastructure support provided by telecom operators to top 4-5 apps large traffic generator apps also corresponds to their revenue growth and in the absence of fair share norms for large apps, the government has lost about ₹800 crore revenue in 2023 alone.

He said that the industry body has submitted a white paper to the ministry of finance in this regard in January.

"The additional capex required to provide the infrastructure to carry the LTG-related data traffic for the year 2023 alone amounts to around ₹10,000 crore.

Accordingly, the proposed fair share to TSPs on the



DEMANDING CONTRIBUTIONS
Telecom operators across the globe have been demanding contributions from large traffic generator apps mainly Netflix, WhatsApp, Instagram, X to support the cost of network infrastructure

amount would have resulted in enhancing AGR-related licence fees and USOF levies (combined 8% of AGR or part of revenue on which government computes its share) to almost ₹800 crores for the government, which is presently not being received," Kochhar said.

Telecom operators across

the world have been demanding contributions from large traffic generator apps mainly Netflix, WhatsApp, Instagram, X etc to support the cost of network infrastructure.

According to COAI's financial analysis, the industry capex, which was Rs 46,532 crores in March 2021, increased to ₹53,661 crores in March 2022, to accommodate the then traffic from telecom operators.

However, from 2022 onwards the infrastructure spends saw a steeper growth in the capex figures, going up to ₹73,922 crores in March 2023.

Kochhar said the enhanced data traffic due to LTGs (large traffic generators) does contribute to the revenue of telecom operators but is grossly inadequate to cover the increase in infrastructure capex. "Going by the current consolidated subscriber base of 114.4 crores, this additional subscriber base of 50 crores is unachievable. This leads to a conclusion that given the current trends, the infrastructure spends will continue to surpass the earnings of the TSPs over the years, since TSP ARPU take into account revenue collections due to

voice, data and SMS for the entire subscriber base," he said.

India crossed the 100 crore subscriber mark in mid-2015 and in last 8.5 years it has added only around 19 crore connections.

"The broadening funnel between baseline TSP traffic and the combined data traffic from TSPs, LTGs and others, which continues to increase, indicates that even higher quality infrastructure would be required to be provided going ahead. The additional infrastructure cost to carry this aggregated data, being due to LTG traffic, needs to be contributed by LTGs," Kochhar said.

A bill sponsored by US Senators Markwayne Mullin, Mark Kelly and Mike Crapo in US Congress, aimed at lowering broadband costs for consumers, has also proposed a direction to telecom regulator Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to mandate social media platforms, streaming services apps, cloud computing service providers like WhatsApp, YouTube, Netflix, Google etc to contribute to universal fund that is used for building networks.

Take Cue from Proposed US Bill on Charging Big Apps: COAI

New Delhi: Telecom operators want the government to adopt a bill, similar to a proposal in the US Congress, that would make large internet apps contribute to infrastructure costs to help lower broadband costs for consumers, a senior industry official said.

A bill sponsored by some Senators in US Congress last month aimed at lowering broadband costs for consumers proposed a direction to telecom regulator Federal Communications Commission to mandate social media platforms, streaming services apps, cloud computing service providers like WhatsApp, YouTube, Netflix, Google etc to contribute to universal

fund that is used for building networks. The proposed bill has classified social media platforms, streaming service, OTT messaging service, video gaming service, videoconferencing service, e-commerce platform, search engines under edge services providers.

Telecom industry body COAI said the proposed bill vindicates the stand taken by service providers in India. "It is not only the telecom service providers who are there, it is edge computing, who are providing content services. Edge computing entities and telecom service providers, or as they call it, broadband providers, both have been clearly defined. This needs to be done in India," said COAI Director General SP Kochhar. —PTI



Indian telecom firms too want fair share of revenues from internet companies

Gulveen Aulakh | 4 min read | 06 Mar 2024, 08:40 PM IST



Telecom companies spent about ₹10,000 crore in additional capital expenditure over 2022-2023 to enhance their infrastructure to support 4-5 large traffic generating platforms or apps, according to an industry body. (Mint)

SUMMARY

An industry body has written to the finance ministry stating that the government too is losing potential revenues in the absence of such an arrangement

Telcos insist on 'fair share' of contribution from OTT players

PICK UP THE TAB! Say their nominal ARPU doesn't justify investment made on upgrade

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Telecom operators on Thursday again urged the government to implement a revenue sharing model or ensure a 'fair share' contribution from over-the-top (OTT) players. It also called for a higher revenue from larger OTT players.

"When high bandwidth OTT applications carry heavy traffic with high quality of service (QoS) requirements (HD video streaming, downloading, sharing, etc.) a fair and proportionate charge needs to be paid to the network provider for facilitating their business."

"For low bandwidth applications which do not generate much traffic, the general data tariffs may suffice," SP Kochhar, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said. He said while telcos have been carrying the massive investment burden for deploying networks and delivering connectivity across the country entirely by themselves, OTT players have emerged offering bandwidth-heavy services and generating disproportionately high traffic, compelling further upgrades and capacity enhancement of the networks, but contributing nothing to the network expenses. "Even in rural areas, where telecom service providers (TSPs) don't have viable business cases to roll out services, OTTs have led to increased demand for data services/bandwidth, with nominal average revenue per user (ARPU), not justifying the network expenses incurred to facilitate it," he said. He noted that the tariff



FOR A CAUSE. Telcos said the tariff rates for telecom consumers in India continue to be among the lowest in the world because the sector is committed to facilitating 'Digital India' and fulfilling the 'Right to Internet' for all Indian citizens — a fundamental right in today's age and scenario.

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'NOT BURDENED USERS'

"We have not raised the required revenues by burdening the end users, as it would defeat the purpose of providing affordable access to all. Therefore, in terms of revenue generation, the focus of the TSPs would now be on networks, applications and innovative services — which includes OTTs," Kochhar said, adding that support is required for the telcos in this fast evolving and rapidly converging digital communications technology landscape, where a collaborative effort needs to be made.



India 5G rollout fastest in world but revenues not picked up: COAI DG SP Kochhar

PTI / Updated: Oct 29, 2023, 21:09 IST

New For You



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The rollout of 5G network in India has been the fastest in the world, but revenue has not increased due to apps that generate 80% of the traffic not paying for the network, according to the Director General of the Cellular Operators Assn ... [Read More](#)



Kochhar said a huge amount of capital expenditure is being invested to roll out these networks. (ET)

Changes to Right of Way Rules to Expedite 5G Rollout: COAI

Temporary overground infra allowed in case of damage, process for small cell sites simpler

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The telecom industry has said that the latest changes in the right of way (RoW) rules allowing the setting up of temporary overground telegraph infrastructure, clarity on street furniture and setting up of small cells etc. will enable rapid network reinstatement and expedite 5G rollout.

"It (the changes) will enable rapid network reinstatement in the event of underground telecom infrastructure damage, expedite 5G rollout by utilising the state-existing infrastructure, simplify application procedures for multiple small cell sites and allocate central government areas for small cell deployment at no cost," said SP Kochhar, director general, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), in a statement Friday.

The association, however, feels that the real benefits of these measures would depend upon their effective implementation by local authorities in letter and spirit.

COAI represents all three private telecom operators — Reliance Jio,

Progressive Changes

Licenses can set up temporary overground telegraph infrastructure when their existing underground infrastructure is damaged

No fees to be charged by the authorities for this temporary setup

Definition of 'street furniture' gives clarity

Single application for multiple small cell sites

Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. The industry has termed the amended RoW rules as progressive and forward-looking, with a clear focus towards enhancing the 5G ecosystem and expansive digital connectivity for all citizens across India. The latest amendments are in continuation to the earlier amendments made in 2017, 2021 and 2022 for further facilitation of rolling out robust telecom infrastructure in the country. The latest amendment allows licensees to set up temporary overground telegraph infrastructure when their existing underground infrastructure is damaged, and no fees will be charged by the authorities for this temporary setup. This would help restore telegraph services on priority, thus preventing major disruptions in services to the users. The amendment, COAI said, also

adds the much-needed clarity in the regulations itself, on the definition of street furniture, which means post or pole used for electricity, street light, traffic light, traffic sign, bus stop, train stop, taxi stand, public lavatory, memorial, public sculpture, utility pole or any other structure or contrivance of such nature established over the property of an appropriate authority, which will aid in faster roll-outs and more efficient network deployments.

As per the revised rules, the appropriate authority shall make provisions allowing the licensee to submit a single application for multiple sites for the establishment of small cells. Further, the appropriate central authorities are now allowed to deploy small cells on their buildings and structures without administrative fees, except for charges related to power and fixtures provided by building owners.

Spectrum allocation to lead ₹31k-cr loss: COAI

New Delhi: Allocation of spectrum in 6 gigahertz band without auction would result in a potential loss of over 3 lakh crore to the national exchequer, telecom industry body COAI said on Wednesday. The Cellular Operators Association of India said that the government should earmark the entire 1200 megahertz (Mhz) of frequencies available in the 6Ghz radiowaves band for 5G mobile service as telecom operators need those to deliver 100 megabit per second download speed (mbps) and 50 mbps upload speed to subscribers. **PTI**

REAL BENEFITS TO HINGE ON HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES IMPLEMENT THEM

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Local cable operators disrupt telecom services: COAI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 1 SEPTEMBER

The telecom industry in Kolkata and its neighbourhood is facing a critical downtime situation as Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are suffering from widespread intentional fibre cuts and damage by local cable operators.

Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar (ret'd), director general, COAI alleged the telecom industry is facing critical network downtime situation in Kolkata, as telecom service providers (TSPs) are suffering from widespread intentional fibre cuts/damage by local cable operators (LCOs) across several localities within the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and surrounding non-KMC areas, which is resulting in the customers suffering due to lack of essential digital connectivity.

The field teams of TSPs are also being prevented from restoration work, by being threatened/ man-handled and hostilely obstructed by the LCOs, leading to exorbitant delays, which is affecting their commitment to restore connectivity within the minimum turn-around time.

The TSPs are not even being allowed to acquire fresh connections by the LCOs.

While TSPs have always adhered to the directives of the local/ municipal authority, such unwarranted coercive actions from unauthorised entities plainly to skew fair competition and limit the customers' choice of service providers, is completely unfair and unjustified.

"We appeal to the state government and the local authorities to urgently intervene and prevent such unlawful practices by the LCOs, and aid TSPs in restoring operations," said the communiqué.



Telcos counter start-ups in net neutrality debate

Ayushi Kar
Mumbai

The Cellular Operators' Association of India has countered the claims made by Indian start-ups on net neutrality, in the ongoing discussion on the need to regulate OTT players.

In a letter to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the Association has argued that the start-ups' appeal to TRAI was founded on falsehood and misinformation.

On September 27, over 128

Start-ups' appeal to TRAI is based on falsehood and misinformation, the cellular operators said

Kamath and Paytm's Vijay Shankar Sharma.

COAI argues that the very foundation of this letter was based on falsehood and misinformation, "which has been used by the entity from which it has originated (Save the Internet), to gather support

sign a letter in support of net neutrality and against network usage fee and telecom licensing of online services. 128 start-ups/ investors have signed," Pahwa said.

NETWORK USAGE FEE

The September 27 letter by the start-ups states that the telecom companies had asked TRAI to allow them to charge start-ups a "network usage fee," and push for certain online apps to be brought under a licensing regime. COAI, in its submissions to TRAI, said telcos have asked the regulator to

signatures as credible or valid, as its entire premise is based on false pretence and misinformed views," COAI states in its letter.

However, the COAI does not provide a counter to the start-ups arguing that such a form of regulatory framework could tilt the playing field in favour of one application or website, especially as definitions of "fair and proportionate share" and "large internet traffic generators" continues to be arbitrary. "The suggested methods of categorising an application or service as "large traffic

Startups, smaller OTTs may be exempted from fair share charge

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 19 January

Telecom operators said they were willing to accommodate rising data traffic generated by all Indian startups, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and smaller over-the-top (OTT) service providers, but want large traffic generators (LTGs) to pay up the proposed fair share charge. However, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has said in its latest submissions to the government that four-five LTGs can't be exempt from the charge.

While these players haven't been named, it is widely understood that global streaming services like Netflix and Amazon are among the LTGs.

The charge is a key ask from the telecom players who say burgeoning data traffic generated by OTTs are resulting in large capital investments needing to be made to maintain telecom networks, and that OTTs should share their revenues. With the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) yet

to give its recommendations on the matter, debate on the issue is on.

"We will accommodate whatever traffic was generated by MSMEs, startups and OTTs up to 2018. This includes Indian e-commerce sites. Except for the four big ones, we will accommodate everybody," COAI Director General S P Kochhar said. "We have taken the baseline of 2019 since data traffic originating from LTGs skyrocketed since then."

Representing the three private-sector telecom firms, the COAI has said the fair share charge is necessary for the development and upkeep of telecom networks, as colossal traffic is being loaded on the networks by OTTs with steady growth in demand for data. In a new white paper, the COAI has shown the infrastructure required for only base-line operator traffic, remains to be much lower compared to what is required to service aggregated traffic generators.

"Thus, the additional cost of rollout of infrastructure to carry this aggregated data causes a burden on infrastructure provision, but without the



return on investment," according to the white paper, seen by *Business Standard*.

Telecom operators say they are hemmed in by the dual pressure of having to undertake massive investments for the rollout of 5G networks, and the slow growth in monthly average revenue per user (ARPU), which stood at just US\$6.16 in the first quarter of FY24.

PRICE WARS

■ Telecom companies say **few large traffic generators (LTGs)** contribute to disproportionate data traffic on networks

■ Fair share charge would allow LTGs to **better optimise data usage**, according to telcos

■ Similar agreement between telcos and Netflix was signed in South Korea in 2023

■ EU also mulling policy to ensure **big Tech players contribute to telecom capex**

But OTTs have argued that telcos would effectively be charging twice for the same service — as they already charge consumers for data. "In any case, surging data traffic is merely data consumed by consumers that they have already purchased from telecom companies. Hence, the strain on infrastructure of telecom firms occurs when they sell data to consumers beyond their capacity — a

fact that has been conveniently ignored," the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has said in its submission to Trai.

The IMAI represents over 500 Indian and multinational corporations including Google, Amazon, Meta, and Apple.

OTTs have also come out against the fair share charge over fears it would demolish net neutrality in India. Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers should enable access to all content and applications regardless of the source, and without favouring or blocking particular products.

But the COAI has said any tariff increases will be the same for everyone. "The Indian telecom firms are bound by their licence conditions to ensure net neutrality, and will continue to do so. The content and services for consumers would remain fully accessible with no traffic management/differentiation. The price for the traffic paid by end users will not change depending on whether the traffic generator is subject to fair share payments or not," it has told Trai.

Telcos Differ with Govt Stance on 6 GHz Spectrum at WRC

Claim talks being steered towards band's designation for delicensed WiFi use

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India's telcos are alarmed at the Indian delegation's interventions regarding the 6 GHz spectrum band at the ongoing World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC), which they say are contrary to the originally agreed upon position.

In a letter to telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw sent Wednesday, the telcos have said that it appears that discussions are being steered towards the band's designation for delicensed WiFi usage.

"Failure to designate this band as originally intended will not only harm India's IMT (mobile services) interests, but also impact the progress towards the development of a worldwide ecosystem for IMT in this band," industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which counts Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea as its members, said in the letter.

The telecom industry sought immediate intervention of Vaishnaw to ensure that the allocation of the 6 GHz band for IMT is decided.

Tech companies have been pushing for the band to be used for

Stiff Fight

Telcos write to telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

Move will hurt India's IMT (mobile services) interests: COAI

Tech cos have been pushing for the band to be used for WiFi

Seek his intervention to ensure that allocation of 6 GHz band for IMT is decided

Tech cos, telcos at loggerheads over this issue



KAILASH T

hing for the band to be used for WiFi, and are at loggerheads with the mobile phone operators on this issue.

The WRC, which is set to conclude on December 15, will take a call if the upper 6 GHz (6.425-7.125) is to be identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) or mobility usage.

While the identification will be done for Region 1 (Europe, Middle East and Africa), the decision will have implications on India, which falls under Region 3 along with China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc. "In light of the criticality of the band for India's 5G and 6G aspira-

tions, we had recommended strict adherence to the Indian position during the ongoing WRC 2023 and requested to kindly ensure that deviations, if any, be affected only upon consultation with all the stakeholders," COAI said.

Earlier, the Broadband India Forum (BIF), which represents tech companies, had termed the recommendations of a Department of Telecommunications (DoT) committee on 6 GHz as "biased" as the panel was one-sided with it comprising only telecom industry associations — COAI and GSMA — with no representation from WiFi bodies.

Cut licence fee: Telcos

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WISH LIST

- Reduce licence to 1% from 3%
- Bar USOF levy
- Define what makes up revenues

New Delhi: The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), the industry body representing telcos, on Thursday urged the government to reduce the licence fee to 1 per cent from 3 per cent, abolish universal service obligation (USOF) levy and clearly define the term "Gross Revenue from telecom activity".

The COAI, which has Reliance Jio, Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel as its members, submitted their memorandum to the finance ministry for the forthcoming interim budget.

"The recent forward-looking reforms signal a positive intent towards a robust and future-ready telecom sector, capable of fuelling India's digital ambitions," S.P. Kochhar, director-general at the

COAI, said.

"But, to fully realise this potential, we must address the financial constraints impeding the sector's expansion. Reducing levy burdens is not just an economic necessity, but a strategic investment in our digital future," he said.

The COAI wants the USOF levy to be abolished. Alternatively, the USOF contribution of 5 per cent of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) may be suspended till the existing USOF corpus (Rs 77,000 crore) is exhausted.

hausted.

The licence fee should be brought down to 1 per cent from 3 per cent to cover only administrative costs of the government.

The COAI said the present definition of gross revenue (GR) includes revenue from all telecom activities. The term telecom activity is not defined but may include revenue from activities believed to be incidental to telecom activity.

"The definition of GR should make it abundantly clear that the revenue from activities for which no licence is required, should not be a part of GR," the COAI said in the recommendations.

The COAI has requested the exemption from service tax on "assignment of right to use natural resources" granted by the Centre and state governments.

Cellular operators, internet service providers welcome Telecom Bill

BALANCING ACT. Say the Bill strikes a balance between safeguarding citizens' interests and growth of sector

S Renuendra Singh
New Delhi

Telecom industry veterans and associations have welcomed the Telecommunications Bill, 2023 introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday saying it paves the way for robust telecom networks through a well-defined right of way (RoW) framework, and such positive measures will significantly accelerate the delivery of digital connectivity benefits to every citizen of India.

Granting RoW in a non-discriminatory manner, clarifying that telecom networks shall be exempted from property taxes, levies, cesses, fees, and duties, protecting arbitrary shutdowns/seizures without prior authorisation



GREATER GOOD. Industry veterans said that such positive measures will significantly accelerate the delivery of digital connectivity benefits to every citizen

mandate from an authorised officer by Central government, establishing common ducts and cable corridors for streamlined network installation, emphasising on responsible application processes and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms, will significantly accelerate the delivery of

ance between safeguarding citizens' interests and ensuring national security, while simultaneously fostering the growth of the telecom sector.

SECTORAL GROWTH "By incorporating measures that prioritise security along with promoting innovation and infrastructure development, the Bill underscores a commitment to both the welfare of citizens and the advancement of the telecommunications industry," Purushothaman KG, Partner and Head, Digital Solutions and Telecommunications Industry Leader at KPMG in India, said.

"To allocate the satellite spectrum through a globally harmonised administrative method will pose a greater

good for the nation and will spur growth in the nascent space sector, foster healthy competition, and ensure a level playing field for all stakeholders involved. This would also spur growth in all downstream sectors of space providing impetus to the space economy in India," A K Bhatt, Director General at Indian Space Association (ISPA), said. According to T T Dasa, Director-General at Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA), the bill aims to ensure the continuity of authorisation and provides for the continuation of rules, guidelines, and administrative orders issued under the existing regime. "It will certainly ease the process of doing business and reduce compliance burdens," he added.

Telco Execs say Telecom Bill Ensures Predictability, Availability of Spectrum

'Streamlines licensing regime; to speed up 5G rollouts'

Our Bureau

Kolkata: India's top telecom executives called the Telecommunications Bill 2023 a watershed moment in the country's telecom reforms process that would streamline the licensing landscape and ring in greater predictability around availability of spectrum and on related matters such as harmonisation and surrender of unused airwaves.

They said the new bill would also speed up 5G rollouts as it gives legal backing to right of way (RoW) rules. The legal backing would provide the necessary enforceability of central RoW rules at the local level, they added.

Bharti Airtel CEO Gopal Vittal said the new telecom bill ushers in simplification of the telecom licensing regime, carrying on the intent of reforms started in September 2021.

"The proposed legislation ensures predictability and availability of spectrum, covering aspects such as reforming, harmonisation and trading/leasing/sharing, which will lead to the creation of a robust digital infrastructure and increased penetration of services," Vittal said in a statement Tuesday.

He added that the bill also brings more predictability around surrender of unused spectrum as well as on primary and secondary assignments.

Vodafone Idea (Vi) CEO Akshaya Moondra, in turn, welcomed the rationalisation of penalties and legal enforceability of right of way (RoW) provisions in the new telecom bill, which was a long-standing request of the telecom industry.

The bill, he said, rightly recognises telecoms as a "critical infrastructure" and prescribes punitive consequences for those damaging it. "By highlighting the duties of users, the bill puts equal responsibility on consumers to meet the requirements of national security," Moondra said in a statement.

The government had on Monday introduced a new telecom bill in the Lok Sabha in a landmark bid to replace three archaic telecom laws.

Airtel's Vittal said the new telecom bill will simplify the "current convoluted system," which includes various types of licensing (license, registration, permission), into a more cohesive and efficient authorisation-based regime.

Separately, the graded and proportionate penalty regime, proposed in the

GOPAL VITTAL
CEO, Bharti Airtel

The proposed legislation ensures predictability and availability of spectrum...

which will lead to the creation of a robust digital infrastructure and increased penetration of services

AKSHAYA MOONDRA
CEO, Vodafone Idea

By highlighting the duties of users, the bill puts equal responsibility on consumers to meet the requirements of national security

SP KOCHHAR
Director General, COAI

The bill incorporates strict provisions in case of unlawful interception of messages or unauthorised access to the same, to help ensure national security

bill, he said, would ring in ease of doing business and compliance while increasing the enforcement rate.

The top executives said the new bill would lead to a reduction in infrastructure rollout costs as it differentiates telecom infrastructure from the property it is installed on.

The COAI said the word 'licence' had been replaced by 'authorisation' in the bill, wherein it has been specified that authorisation would be required to provide telecommunication services. This will simplify the overall regulatory landscape for telecom services, the bill also incorporates strict provisions in case of unlawful interception of messages or unauthorised access to the same, to help ensure national security," S.P. Kochhar, director-general, COAI, said.

Navigating the Indian telecom landscape in 2024

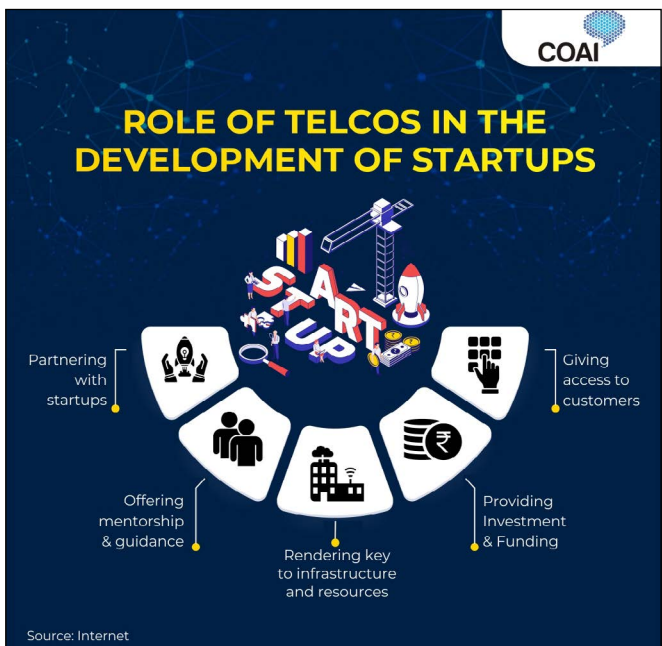
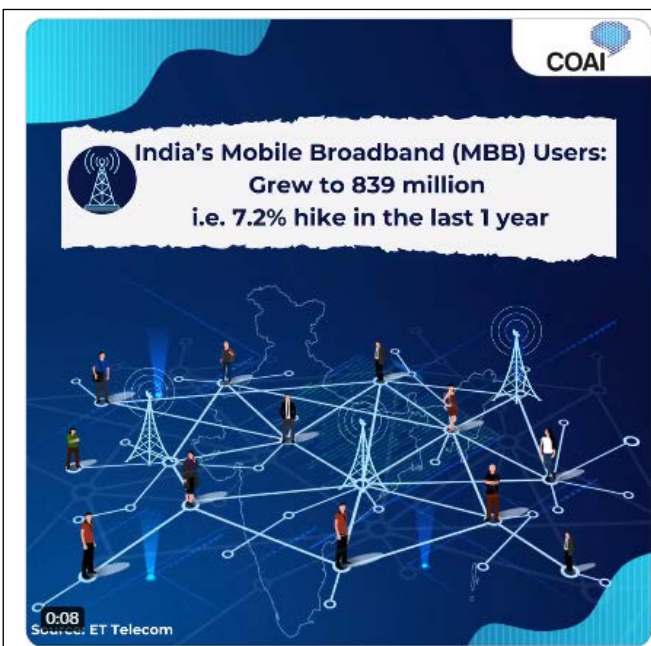
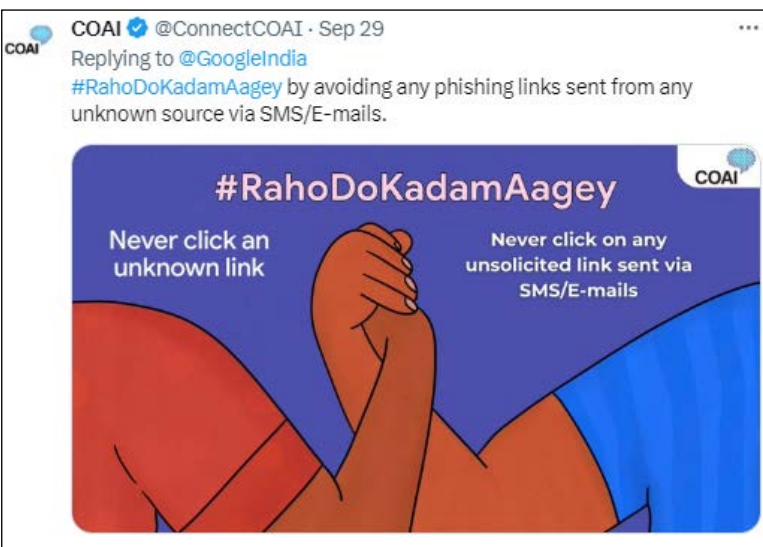
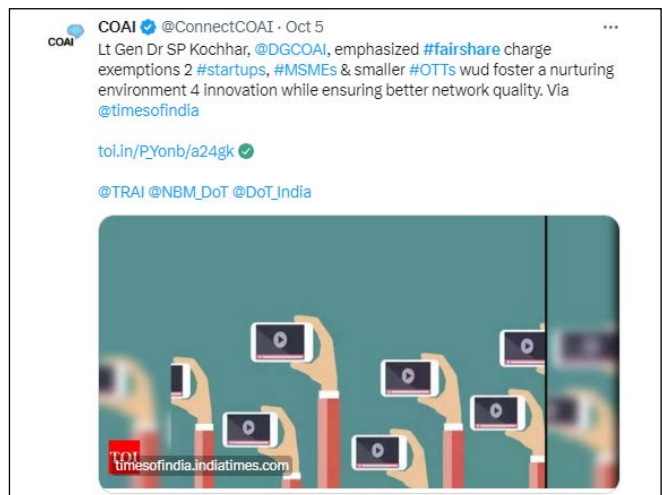
January 23, 2024



LT. GEN. DR. SP KOCHHAR
DIRECTOR GENERAL
CELLULAR OPERATORS
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
(COAI)

As India's digital fabric unfolds, the telecom sector remains essential, carrying information, connecting people, and driving progress. In 2024, we anticipate ongoing changes in this dynamic field and the Indian telecom industry is ready to work together, creating an environment that encourages innovation and inclusivity. Reiterating our push for a supportive regulatory framework, we stay positive about the sector's possibilities. The 5G rollout, a key part of our designs for a tech-savvy India, is picking up speed. We see faster progress in infrastructure developments and accelerated adoption of advanced applications in areas like health, education, and agriculture.





COAI
@ConnectCOAI

With increasing rise in data traffic from Large Traffic Generators (LTGs), global concerns are growing. Explore @jaijit's insightful take on adopting the internet's funding structure for LTGs to strengthen India's telecom sector.

Read more: @ET_Government



Funding structure of internet for Large Traffic Generators: Lessons for India from the Kor...

From government.economictimes.indiatimes.com

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

COAI White Paper on "Addressing Rising Data Traffic & #Telecom Infrastructure Costs", uses statistics & facts to bring out the need for #LTGs to contribute responsibly for robust telecom & digital economy in India.

Read more: @MuntazirAbbas in @ETTelecom



Top OTT players should share telecom infra cost: Whitepaper - ET Telecom

From telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

An insightful article by @jaijit's, President @CDEPResearch in @ETGovernment on why #LTGs must partner #telcos amid surging #data usage for holistic #telecom growth; similar to the successful #revenuesharing model between cable TV #channels & #operators!




Telecom Conundrum: Roadmap for telecom networks to avoid the quagmire of Kalidasa ...

From government.economictimes.indiatimes.com

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

Dr. Jaijit Bhattacharya, President of @CDEPResearch, delves into the ongoing OTT matter, detailing how LTGs affect telecom companies that they ride on, causing a cycle of low returns & substantial investments for the #TSPs, dragging the sector down @jaijit



Large traffic generators unleashing Kalidasa effect on telecom networks: What is the wa...


From government.economictimes.indiatimes.com

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

An article in @ET_Government by a renowned policy expert highlights the crucial role of TSPs in India's digital transformation despite low return/ARPU, besides lack of financial support from LTGs, who ride on their networks for free.

@jaijit

Read more:



Solving the telecom conundrum: Revenue sharing for equitable networks - ET Governm...

From government.economictimes.indiatimes.com

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

The year 2023 marked a watershed in Indian #Telecom Sector, with the introduction of the new and enhanced #TelecomAct, alongside other pivotal governmental initiatives. With India leading the fastest #5G deployment globally and boasting the world's second-largest internet user base, we are poised to elevate our capabilities with #6G, #cybersecurity, and more. Enhanced service quality and collaborative support from LTGs towards rising telecom #infra costs via #fairshare would help further digital terrain growth.

Read more: @telenet_mag
tele.net.in/connectivity-f...
@DoT_India @TRAI @DGCOAI

COAI
@ConnectCOAI

The **#TelecomBill2023**, tabled in the parliament today paves the way for robust telecom networks through a well-defined Right of Way (**#RoW**) framework, encompassing: Granting RoW in a non-discriminatory manner, clarifying that telecom networks shall be exempted from property taxes, levies, cesses, fees, and duties, protecting arbitrary shutdowns/sealings without prior authorization mandate from an authorized officer by Central Government, establishing common ducts and cable corridors for streamlined network installation, emphasizing on responsible application process and efficient dispute resolution mechanisms.

COAI believes that such positive measures will significantly accelerate the delivery of digital connectivity benefits to every citizen of India.

#RoWReform #TelecomUpdates

@neerajmittalias @devusinh @AshwiniVaishnaw @DoT_India @TRAI @Gol_Meity @PIB_India @mkdmandar

5:08 PM · Dec 18, 2023 · 11K Views

Stay Informed!

PM Narendra Modi is giving 3 months free recharge to all the Indian users to certify New Year 2024 so that more and more people can vote for BJP in the 2024 elections and BJP government can be formed again.


FAKE

Click on the link given below to get 3 months Free Recharge. (Last date - 26 Jan, 2024)

Government of India is not offering free mobile recharge.

COAI

TELECOM ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023



5G

India becoming world's second-largest 5G network with fastest 5G rollout in the world.

6G

India's Leadership in 6G with Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi unveiling the "Bharat 6G Vision."

Green Energy

Green energy open access to telecom operators by the Ministry of Power's gazette notification.

DoT

DoT clarifying the applicable fees for EMF audit tests.

Introduction of the Telecommunications Bill 2023 replacing old laws such as:

- The Indian Telegraph Act, 1885
- The Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933
- The Indian Wireless Telegraphy (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950

COAI

Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), the technical arm of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has added

37 more products under Simplified Certification Scheme (SCS)

w.e.f 1st Jan, 2024

1. Reduced certification time from 8 weeks to 2 weeks.

PRODUCTS INCLUDING

- Transmission Terminal Equipment
- Optical Fibre or Cable
- IP Security Equipment
- IP Terminals
- Media Gateway

(Total products increased from 12 to 49)
[Promoting ease of doing business]

2. Evaluation fee completely waived off.
[Benefitting the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) or applicants due to reduction in application fee by more than 80%]

3. TEC to charge administrative fee only for Essential Requirement (ER) based applications.

4. Presently, 60 Telecom & Networking products notified under Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE) regime.

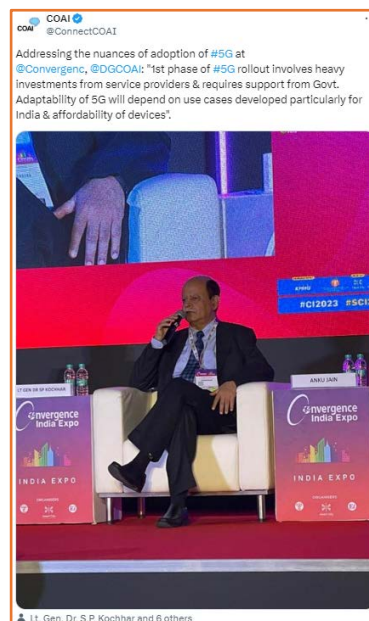
Source: PIB

11

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS



Convergence India Expo 2023



EMF Awareness Program



4th Meeting of the Working Committee for #5G Rollout Andhra Pradesh



Capacity Building Conference on #5G, Uttar Pradesh



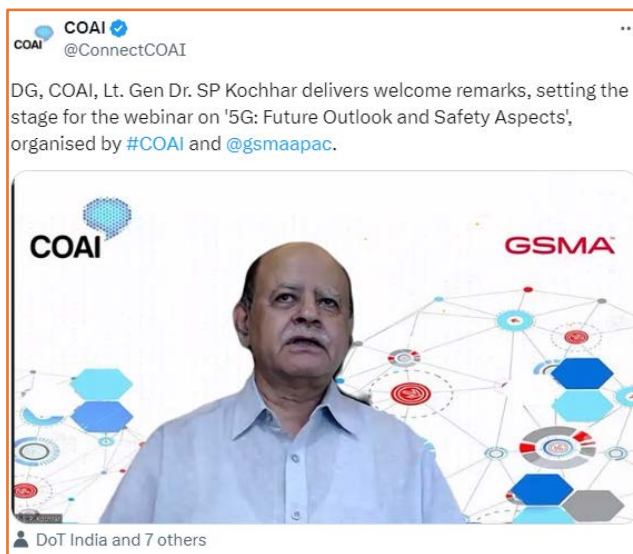
6G India 2023 International Conference



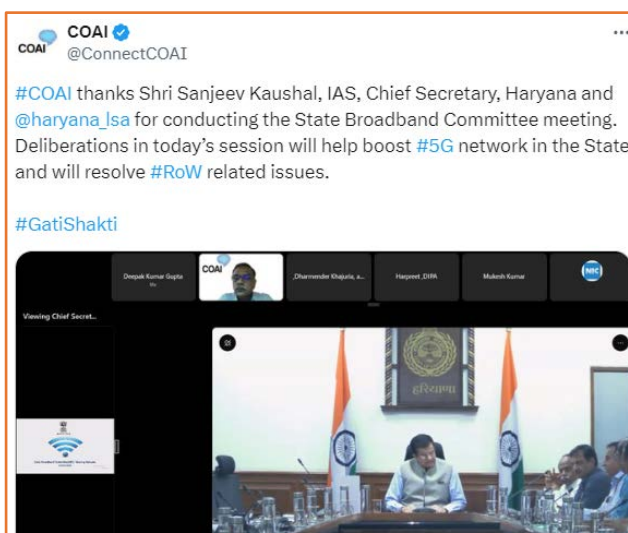
Invitation of GSMA's Webinar



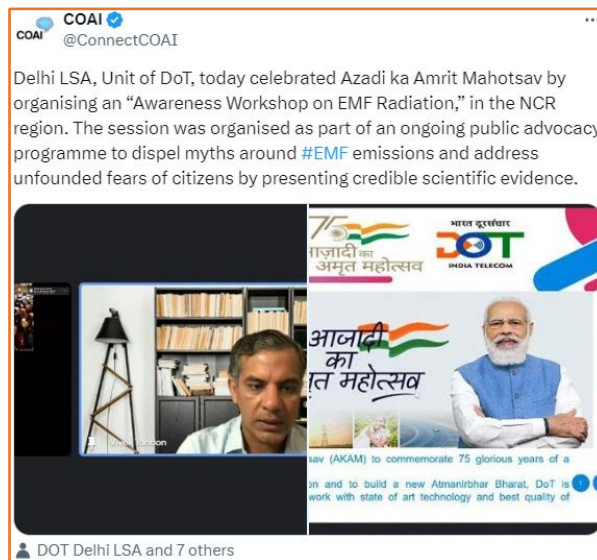
5G: Future Outlook and Safety Aspects Webinar in collaboration with GSMA (22nd May)



State Broadband Meeting with Haryana Government



Awareness Workshop on EMF Radiation



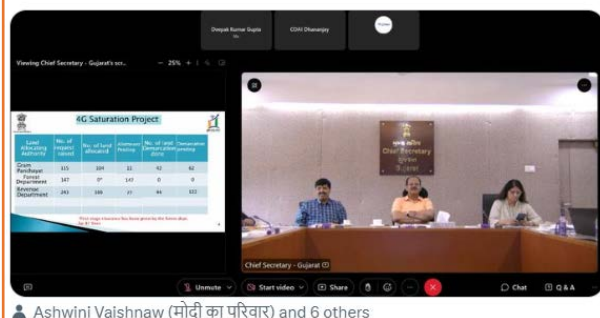
Interaction with NBT Tech ED on 5G



5th State Broadband Committee Meeting

#COAI thanks Shri Raj Kumar, IAS (Chief Secretary, Gujarat) and Gujarat LSA (@Guj_LSA_DoT_MoC), for conducting the 5th State Broadband Committee meeting. Today's meeting will help resolve #RoW issues and strengthen #5G network across the State.

#GatiShakti



Digital India Vision 8.0: Techade of the Youth

In CNBC TV18 Digital India Vision 8.0: Techade of the Youth, Director General, Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI, stated that OTT cannot function without Networks. Our expectation from the telecom bill is that anyone who uses our networks should also contribute towards creating...

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Right to Excellence Tech Summit 2023



Voice & Data 5G+ conference: Telecom Leadership Forum (TLF)

During the @voicendata_ Telecom Leadership Forum 5G+, Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI, delivered a powerful message that with every data point, our carbon footprint and costs rise. This underscores the paramount importance of prioritizing green solutions. Let's make...

[Show more](#)



COAI @ConnectCOAI · Sep 15, 2023

At the @voicendata_ Telecom Leadership Forum 5G+, Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar, @DGCOAI, highlighted that by optimizing energy use, we can cut costs by up to 20% in just one year. The radio access network alone accounts for 70% of telcos' energy consumption – a key area for...

[Show more](#)



India Mobile Congress 2024

Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi awarded 100 5G labs for nation-building at the inauguration ceremony of IMC '23.
[#IMC2023](#) [#GlobalInnovationAtIMC](#) [#PMAtIMC2023](#)
[@PMOIndia](#) [@exploreIMC](#) [@DoT_India](#)
[@narendramodi](#)



On behalf of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), Lieutenant General Dr. SP Kochhar, [@DGCOAI](#), sends his warmest regards on the successfully progressing event of India Mobile Congress 2023 on Day 2.
[@exploreIMC](#) [@DoT_India](#)
[#imc](#) [#imc23](#) [#day2](#)



31st Convergence India Expo 2024



Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure: Strengthening Coastal Telecommunications Infrastructure Resilience



Workshop on 'Proliferation of 5G Network'

COAI thanks Shri Prabodh Saxena, IAS (Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh) & #GovtofHimachalPradesh for organizing the #5G workshop in the State. Proliferation of 5G network & its use cases will enrich the State & its economy.

#NationalBroadbandMission #GatiShakti #DigitalIndia



5G: Future Outlook and Safety Aspects

Chief Guest, Shri Sanjeev Agrawal, Member (Technology), @DoTIndia, delivering the Special Address at the webinar on '5G: Future Outlook and Safety Aspects', organised by #COAI and @GSMA.



Lt. Gen. Dr. SP Kochhar meets Shri Chanchal Kumar, IAS, Ministry of Development of Northeast Region

A fruitful meeting held today with Shri Chanchal Kumar IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Development of #NorthEast Region & the COAI team led by @DGCOAI Lt Gen Dr SP Kochhar. We look forward to working closely towards better #telecom infrastructure & #digital connectivity in the region



DG COAI met with Commissioner GST Punjab along with the concerned Senior officers to discuss the industry issues related to GST, on 30th October 2023



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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.

INDUSTRY POLICY

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.



TELECOM ISSUES

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.



NEW TECHNOLOGIES

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.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

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.



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COAI LEADERSHIP



MR. PRAMOD K. MITTAL
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.



MR. P. BALAJI
VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Pramod Kumar Mittal co Balaji is a member of the Core Leadership Team (CLT) of Vodafone Idea Ltd, a leading telecom operator serving citizens and enterprises across India. The CLT has successfully led the planning and execution of the world's largest telecom merger, in a record two years. He leads the company's Regulatory, Public Policy and Government Relations activities along with Industry advocacy, Corporate Communications, Reputation Management and CSR.

He is a pioneer in the Telecom sector, joining the sector at its infancy in 1993. He has the unique experience of holding leadership positions in all three telecom verticals, with leading Technology, Devices companies and Telecom Operator.

Prior to joining Vodafone, Balaji was Managing Director of Nokia India and Sony Mobile. Over the years, he has held senior leadership positions in start-up and turn-around ventures of TATA group, AT&T, Ericsson, and Lucent Technologies. Balaji is the Chairman of ASSOCHAM National Digital Communications Council, and Member of National Council of apex industry chambers CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and All India Management Association.



LT. GEN. DR. S.P. KOCHHAR
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. 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.





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COAI MEMBERS

Core Members



Associate Members





The COAI secretariat comprises of the Director General at the helm, with the 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 the digital communications ecosystem in the country.

The Secretariat has a team strength of 21 people working currently, bringing in talent and skills from various areas of work, such as regulatory, legal, finance, technology, infrastructure and communications/advocacy.

The Team:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, Director General | 12. Mr. Jagjeet Singh Sahani, Manager – Legal |
| 2. Mr. Vikram Tiwathia, Deputy Director General (Technology) | 13. Mr. Deepak Kumar Gupta, Manager - TIC |
| 3. Mr. Savjit S. Soin, Deputy Director General (Regulatory) | 14. Mr. Suprateek Gulia, Manager – TIC |
| 4. Mr. Gopal Mittal, Associate Director General - Commercial & Finance | 15. Ms. Neetu Sharma, Manager - Accounts |
| 5. Mr. Saurabh Puri, Associate Director General - Policy & Strategy | 16. Mr. Abhijit Panicker, Deputy Manager - Technology & Security |
| 6. Mr. Dhananjay Gawanday, Director – TIC | 17. Ms. Priya Bhadra Bhowmik, Assistant Manager – Associate Members |
| 7. Mr. Kshem Kapoor, Director - Technology & Security | 18. Ms. Ashika V, Assistant Manager - Regulatory |
| 8. Mr. Kaustuv Sircar, Senior Manager – Communications & Public Affairs | 19. Ms. Akriti Shashank, Assistant Manager – Legal |
| 9. Mr. Sunder Singh Poriya, Senior Manager – Administration | 20. Mr. Sumit Mondal, Assistant Manager- Communications & Public Affairs |
| 10. Mr. Ashish Mathur, Senior Manager - Regulatory | 21. Mr. Satyam Mishra, Assistant Manager- Legal |
| 11. Ms. Manisha Chawla, Executive Assistant to DG | 22. Mr. Dibya Prakash Lahiri, Senior Executive- Regulatory |
| | 23. Mr. Mukesh Kumar, Advisor-TIC |



NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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

