



**COAI**

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# I-DIGEST

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

### Director General, COAI

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#### From DG's Desk

The Telecom industry is the backbone of India's digital economy. With a robust infrastructure of over 7.44 lakh cell towers and over 24.28 lakh BTSs (source: DoT) spread out over the nation, the telecom sector made sure that even during a pandemic; everyone was connected and able to conduct business as usual. The expectations from the telecom business have doubled with the much-anticipated launch of 5G services. The sector has been collaborating closely with the Government and other stakeholders to keep up with these technical advancements, and numerous encouraging developments have emerged over the course of the year.

The introduction of the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill was perhaps one of the biggest and welcome developments in 2022. The bill proposes to consolidate and alter the existing laws controlling the provision, development, extension, and operation of telecommunication services, telecom networks and infrastructure, as well as spectrum allocation to suit the modern and futuristic requirements of the sector and to help extract optimum benefits from the same for the citizens and the economy, going forward.

It lays a strong emphasis on spectrum-related reforms that would aid in prudent management of the national resource, such as reframing and harmonization, sharing/trading/leasing, technology-neutral use, returning unused spectrum to the government, surrender of the spectrum, etc. We also highly appreciate the legal support for Right of Way, which has been the main obstacle to 5G deployment. The Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2022, will also help the industry in faster proliferation of Digital infrastructure, especially for 5G - via deployment of small cells, aerial fiber, and use of optimal use of street furniture to enhance connectivity. States/Local Authorities must adopt the Central RoW Rules in an expedited manner.

Additionally, the draft Bill emphasizes on "Protection of Users" with important clauses on KYC, Protection from Unsolicited Messages, Caller ID to be Visible to Recipient, Duty of the User to Provide Correct KYC, etc. This will assist in addressing the rising concerns like security, fraud, and unsolicited telemarketing calls and messages that directly affect the general population.

It is most fairly and practicably proposed that the Over-the-Top (OTT) communication platforms, which provide telecom-like services like voice/video calls and messaging to the same clients directly, be included in the Telecom Act. OTT Communication Service Providers are not subject to any kind of regulation, which significantly undermines the market's fairness. Moreover, being outside the licensing regime, OTT Communication Providers do not have any obligation towards security requirements, which poses a great risk to national security.

Further, given the alarmingly rising cases of frauds and scams on the OTT platforms, focusing on safeguarding the security and privacy aspects of the users becomes all the more important, in view of consumer interest and



wellbeing. OTT Communication Services must be incorporated into the Draft Telecom Bill's framework to bring in accountability, security, fair competition and a level playing field in the sector.

Reforms brought in the areas of wireless licensing have also sped up investments and made it simpler to obtain SACFA certificate clearance, which is necessary to place small cells on street furniture, along with a marked reduction in the processing fee. Further, digitization of processes introduced by the government on several fronts is enhancing ease of doing business in the country.

In line with the Hon. Prime Minister's vision of "Digital India," telcos are continuously updating their infrastructure to keep up with modern technology. By doing so, we seek to bridge the digital divide and contribute to India's goal of having a USD 1 trillion digital economy by 2025.

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

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# COAI

## Latest Updates:



### **Revenue from Landline to be excluded AGR Computation**

DoT, vide letter no. L-14010/01/2021-NTG dated December 26, 2022, issued a circular and clarified that for calculating SUC amount with the weighted average method, the AGR will be taken after excluding revenue from wireline services. This was an old request of the industry and resolution of the same will help in reducing financial burden for doing compliances.

### **Maharashtra state RoW policy amendment:**

DIT, Govt. of Maharashtra, notified its Telecom Infrastructure policy (RoW) on 4th Dec 2022, becoming the first in the country to adopt the RoW 2022 amendments. The policy incorporates important aspects such as permission period co-opt with licence duration instead of existing 5 years validity, use of street furniture, and other important points.

### **Maharashtra state Urban Local Body guidelines issued:**

Urban Development-2, Govt. of Maharashtra also notified its RoW policy on 19th Dec 2022. Points concerning submission of application through Gatishakti, appointment of nodal officer, permission of installation of Poles for small cells, etc. have been included.

### **TRAI CP on "Rating of Buildings or Areas for Digital Connectivity"**

COAI submitted the response to the CP to TRAI on 30th June 2022. Open House Discussion on the CP was held on 29th Aug 2022. COAI participated in the Conference held on the topic on 16th Nov 2022. The recommendations on the same are awaited.

### **TRAI CP on "Embedded SIM for M2M Communication"**

COAI submitted the response to the CP to TRAI on 20th Sep 2022. Open House Discussion on the same was held on 14th Dec 2022.

### **TRAI CP on "Rationalization of Entry Fee and Bank Guarantees"**

COAI has submitted the response to the CP to TRAI on 07th Sep 2022. Open House Discussion on the same was held on 09th Dec 2022.

### **TRAI CP on "Calling Name Presentation in Telecommunication Sector"**

TRAI issued a consultation paper on Calling Name Presentation on 29th Nov 2022 and COAI discussed the same in the Regulatory Committee meeting held on 08th Dec 2022. We have sought an extension of 6 weeks to respond.

### **Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022**

COAI response on the draft 'Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 was shared with all members for inputs and suggestions. The final collated inputs have been submitted to MeitY and in MyGov.in portal.

### **Draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022**

- The draft Indian Telecommunications Bill 2022 was issued by the DoT for Public Consultation on 21st September 2022.
- The draft inputs/Comments are being prepared by COAI for submission to DoT.

### **Safety measures regarding C Band radio-altimeter vs. 5G/IMT band stations**

COAI Letter on the Safety measures proposed regarding C Band radio-altimeter vs. 5G/IMT band stations with regard to the DoT letter File No. T-11012/04/2022-Conf. (Pt.) was submitted to DoT on 2nd Dec 2022.

### **TCCCPR**

COAI Letter submitted to TRAI on 20th Sep 2022 seeking two weeks' time to revert on sharing of the Opt-in supporting documents sought by TRAI.

### **TEC Discussion Paper on Radio Frequency (RF) Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Compliance Assessment of 5G Base Stations'**

COAI Response on the TEC Discussion Paper on "Radio Frequency (RF) Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Compliance Assessment of 5G Base Stations" has been submitted to TEC.

#### **Review of the TSTP for 4G LTE FDD & 4G LTE TDD and to Formulate TSTP for 5G Technology roll out**

A virtual meeting was organised by TEC on 21st Dec 2022 to review the TSTP for 4G LTE FDD & 4G LTE TDD, and to Formulate TSTP for 5G Technology roll out. In this regard, a COAI letter with inputs from members has been sent to TEC.

#### **Committee formed for Studies In 6 GHz Frequency Band (5925–7125 MHz)**

Final COAI inputs were submitted to the Committee formed for Studies In 6 GHz Frequency Band (5925–7125 MHz) on 20th Dec 2022.

#### **Revision of TEC Standard for "Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) for Wireless Communication Devices used in close proximity of human body"**

COAI participated in the meeting of the Joint Development Coordination Committee-Subcommittee (DCC-SC) and Manufacturer Forum Meeting of Radio Division of TEC. In this regard, a draft report was shared with members for inputs.

#### **Revision of TEC standard on Generic Requirements for "EMF Strength Measuring Instrument in the frequency range of 30 MHz to 3/6 GHz"**

TEC is in the process of revising the TEC Standards on Generic Requirements for "EMF Strength Measuring Instrument in the frequency range of 30 MHz to 3/6 GHz". The last date to submit the response was 22nd Dec 2022. COAI has sought one month extension on the same.

#### **TRAI Guidelines - Streamlining the process of seeking renewal of exemption of 05 paisa on SMS Charges in terms of TCCCP, 2018.**

Regarding the recent Guidelines issued by TRAI on 30th Sept 2022 on streamlining the process of seeking renewal of exemption of 05 paisa SMS Charges under TCCCP, 2018, our members had sought clarity on certain aspects from TRAI, and also provide the updated consolidated list of the Headers exempted from such charge with the TSPs along with expiry date of each Header, in order to avoid any type of ambiguity. COAI Letter on the above subject was submitted to TRAI on 26th Dec 2022.

#### **V2X/ITS Committee under the chairmanship of WA**

A meeting of the V2X Committee was held on 14th Dec 2022. The Committee has shared the draft final report for circulation. COAI has shared the same with members for review.

#### **TEC Test procedure for Measurement of Electromagnetic Fields from Base Station Antenna**

A CLC Meeting was held on 6th Dec 2022, to review the Scheme of penalty in case of violation of terms and

conditions of License and related instructions on the matter of EMF Radiation. In this regard, a draft report is being formulated to finalise the same.

#### **Representation on additional process for eSIM transfer from one device to another**

This is with reference to increasing availability of eSIM enabled devices in the market and associated requirements. In this regard, a COAI letter was submitted to DoT on 13th Dec 2022 on the requirement of additional process for eSIM transfer from one device to another.

#### **Court Appearance and deposing of evidence, U/s 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, by TSP Nodal officers and Alternate Nodal Officers**

This is with reference to the COAI Letter dated 05th May, 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". In this regard, COAI Letter on "Court Appearance and deposing of evidence, U/s 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, by TSP Nodal officers and Alternate Nodal Officers" was submitted to DoT on 12th Dec 2022.

#### **Ericsson's Presentation on ECR\_EP in COAI office**

A meeting of TSPs and OEMs was organised in the COAI office on 08th Dec 2022, where Ericsson's Sweden Team presented a new study on Energy Passport Requirement which they have proposed to TEC for standardization.

#### **NSDTS**

COAI persuaded NCSC team to organise stakeholders' meeting with Industry Association on 22nd Dec 2022, to resolve the long pending and new issues related to NSDTS's Trusted Telecom Portal; apart from other concerns related to Ease of Doing Business.

#### **IMEI Letter to DoT**

Based on letter issued by COAI, DoT Security Assurance Wing notified that the requirement of registration of IMEIs of mobile phones being manufactured in the country for export is kept in abeyance till further orders.

#### **Submission Made to Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra**

Submission was made to Shri Manu Kumar Srivastava, IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Maharashtra on 28th Dec 2022, regarding indiscriminate aerial fiber cuts by Local Authorities in Mumbai and Pune. Another submission was made to Chief Secretary, GoMH on 19th Dec 2022, requesting to direct Urban Development Department (UD-2), Govt of Maharashtra, on priority implementation of Telecommunication Infrastructure Policy. Additional points regarding permission to lay OH OFC, deemed approval, etc. were also highlighted.

#### **Advocacy for Industrial rates for Telecom**



Letters to Chairmen of various DISCOMs of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Puducherry, J&K, Ladakh, Punjab, HP, Bihar and Jharkhand states were written in the month of Dec 2022, requesting for of Industrial/Utility rates for EB connections for telecom infrastructure.

#### **Submission Made to Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala**

A letter to Chief Secretary, Govt. of Kerala was written on 7th Dec 2022, regarding issues concerning Optical Fiber Cable Cuts by Authorities in Kerala.

#### **SBC of Maharashtra:**

5th SBC chaired by Chief Secretary, Govt of Maharashtra was held on 15th Dec 2022. COAI highlighted the issues faced by members, requesting the state government for support.

#### **SBC of Andhra Pradesh:**

4th SBC chaired by the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh – Shri Dr. K.S. Jawahar Reddy, IAS was held on 07th Dec 2022. Important points discussed were – Pendencies of Cases with various Departments (PRRD, PRED, DTCP, MAUD, TR&B), alignment of State Policy in line with Central RoW Amendment Rules, Administrative Charges, Compensation Charges, Restoration Charges, etc.

#### **Amendment issued by Madhya Pradesh Government:**

An amendment was issued by GoMP on 14th Dec 2022, regarding uniform rate of INR1000/per KM being made applicable for Underground cables.

#### **Call Before You Dig App:**

Implementation of “Call Before U Dig”(cBuD) Mobile app will help asset owners to safeguard their existing underground utility assets during digging activities and will be useful to avoid damages to existing assets. The cBuD App was pilot launched in Gujarat and UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Now the cBuD has been extended for pan-India and asset owners are creating users up to the District levels for best utilization of the platform.

#### **Advocacy with Central Ministries**

Letters submitted to Central Ministries (MoRTH, MoEF, MoR and AAI) for Alignment to Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2022.

#### **Chandigarh Broadband committee meeting:**

Chandigarh UT Broadband Committee Meeting was held

on 22nd Dec 2022. Industry, along with concerned stakeholders, finalized the Chandigarh Draft Policy alignment with RoW Amendment 2022.

#### **Submission to MCD Commissioner**

A letter was submitted to Commissioner MCD regarding concerns w.r.t. the recent Policy notification on Installation of Small cells and carrying telegraph lines using poles.

#### **AST open house at Uttarakhand:**

Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Shri. V.L. Kantha Rao (AST) on 28th Dec 2022, at Dehradun, Uttarakhand to discuss various issues related to telecom infrastructure deployment. The meeting was attended by Shri Amit Kumar Sinha (Director, IT), officials from the State Government, Uttarakhand LSA, TSP/IP members, COAI and DIPA.

#### **5G Working committee meeting Haryana**

1st 5G Committee meeting held on 20th Dec 2022, under the chairmanship of ACS to Govt. of Haryana regarding roll-out of 5G in the State.

#### **Operational Committee meeting Punjab**

Operational Committee constituted under the State Broadband Committee of the state of Punjab was held on 1st Dec 2022, chaired by the Principal Secretary, Industry & Commerce. Various operational challenges of the telecom industry were discussed in detail at the meeting.

#### **GST Compliances**

Detailed submissions were made by COAI on key issues faced by the industry. During the 48th Meeting of the GST Council on 17th Dec 2022, the GST Council issued clarification on various issues including – Input Tax Credit (ITC) Reversal for Invoices Not Paid Within 180 Days.

2. Procedure for confirming ITC discrepancies for FY 2017–18 and 2018–19 between GSTR-3B and GSTR-2A.
3. Same will help in ease of doing compliances and lessen the need for litigation.

### **6 GHz spectrum vital for super-fast 5G speed, says COAI**

As India rolls out 5G at a much faster pace than expected, it is critical to identify 6GHz band for international mobile telecommunications (IMT) services, to not only aid long term network planning but also help the National Broadband Mission achieve broadband speeds up to 50 mbps by 2024-25. [Read more](#)



### **A step towards realising the digital India dream: Draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022**

India is today taking giant strides towards becoming a digitally empowered society and knowledge based economy. [Read more](#)



### **COAI forward looking statement on 5G, for 2023**

This year witnessed the much awaited landmark launch of 5G services in India and has been a turning point for the entire country. [Read more](#)



### **Telcos seek tax credit refund, reduction in levies ahead of Budget 2023**

Telecom industry plans to negotiate with the government on levies including license fees and charges to the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) as part of their recommendations for the upcoming 2023-24 budget. [Read more](#)







# COAI

## News Wires:

### **'Telcos should be compensated for all their expenditure to build the networks in India'**

The director general of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), SP Kochhar explains why telcos want OTTs to pay usage charges for using their infrastructure. He also makes a pitch for financially compensating telcos for assisting in surveillance like phone tapping and business disruptions during internet shutdowns. [Read more](#)



### **2022 proves to be a landmark year as 5G clocks in**

"As the country witnessed that landmark launch of 5G services by none other than the Hon'ble Prime Minister, at the India Mobile Congress, we entered into the next era of technological advancement and progress. [Read more](#)



# COAI Events

## 2nd meeting of State Broadband Policy – West Bengal

COAI expressed gratitude towards Sh. H.K. Dwivedi IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal, IT Department & DoT West Bengal LSA for organising the 2nd meeting of the Governing Body of the State Broadband Policy. The meeting deliberations will help in the speedy deployment of critical telecom infrastructure in the state.



## 4th State Broadband Committee – Andhra Pradesh

COAI is grateful to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana LSA for organising the 4th State Broadband Committee meeting. The deliberations of the meeting will go a long way in ensuring streamlined deployment of 5G in the state.



## 3rd State Broadband Committee meeting – J&K

COAI thanks Sh. Arun Kumar Mehta (Chief Secretary, J&K) & Jammu & Kashmir LSA for conducting the 3rd State Broadband Committee meeting. The meeting deliberations would resolve RoW-related issues significantly and help faster 5G roll-out in the UT.

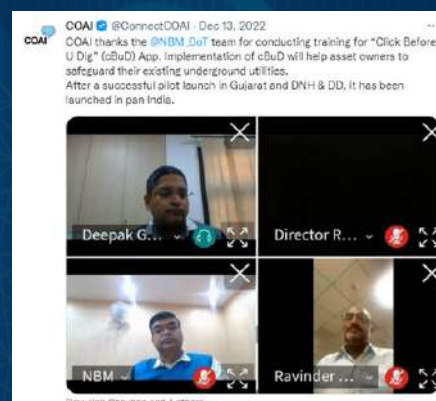




# COAI Events

## “Click Before U Dig” (cBuD) training session

COAI thanks the National Broadband Mission team for conducting training for the “Click Before U Dig” (cBuD) App. Implementation of cBuD will help asset owners safeguard their existing underground utilities. After a successful pilot launch in Gujarat and DNH & DD, it has been launched pan-India.



## 5th State Broadband Committee meeting – Maharashtra

COAI thanks Sh. Manu Kumar Srivastava (IAS), Chief Secretary, Maharashtra and Mumbai LSA for organising the 5th State Broadband Committee meeting of the state. The deliberation held during the meeting will support the seamless deployment of 5G services across the state.



## State Broadband Committee Meeting – West Bengal

COAI thanks Chief Secretary, Sikkim, and West Bengal LSA (Sikkim Unit) for organising the State Broadband Committee meeting. The meeting outcomes will positively lead to faster deployment of telecom services in the state, including 5G roll-out.



# COAI Events

## 1st 5G Committee Meeting – Haryana

COAI thanks Sh. Anand Mohan Sharan, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Haryana for chairing the 1st 5G Committee Meeting of the state. Such meetings shall ensure the speedy deployment of 5G services in Haryana.



## EMF Awareness Webinar – West Bengal

With an intention to create awareness around EMF emissions amongst the public, DoT West Bengal (LSA) organized an insightful webinar with eminent speakers. Sh. R.K Sharma, Sr. DDG, DoT WB LSA; Sh. S.K. Deka, Director (Compliance), DoT WB LSA, along with Dr. Suresh Attili, MD (Int. MED). The speakers educated the audience about various aspects of the policy framework and debunked myths related to alleged health impacts due to EMF emissions.



## Open house discussion – RoW Issues

COAI thanks, Shri. V.L Kantha Rao AS (T), DoT, for chairing the Open house discussion with Telecom Sector Stakeholders along with the state Govt. Officials of Uttarakhand regarding the RoW Issues. This will lay the foundation of a robust telecom infrastructure in the state.







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