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LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

The telecom industry of India is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world and has seen only an upward spike in the recent past. The Govt. of India has been instrumental in this by bringing in Digital India initiatives, upskilling opportunities and the recent launch of 5G has changed the scenario altogether. India has come a long way in its evolution of technology and digitization.

In the month of March 2023, a total of 102,000 5G Base Stations (BTS) have been installed in India, and as iterated by the Union Communication Minister, India is witnessing the fastest deployment of 5G network in the world. The significantly high speeds, low latency and higher bandwidth of 5G services are expected to revolutionize customer experience across multiple levels.

With India all set to unlock the unprecedented capabilities of 5G, the demand for mid-band spectrum assumes critical significance for the rapid and efficient deployment of 5G networks across the country, as the demand of 5G in the masses starts picking pace. The industry continues to pursue the need to identify the full 1200 MHz of the 6 GHz band for IMT, as it could help accelerate the country's 5G rollout by enabling mobile network operators to deploy faster and more efficient networks. This would be in line with the nation's present march towards the Digital India mission at a blazing speed.

With the advancement of technology and its subsequent demand, another thing that has witnessed a rise are the illegal use of boosters/repeaters, which are harming the customer experience and leading to issues like call drops, low data speeds, etc., especially in metropolitan cities where the usage of data is much more than other parts of the country. The industry collectively approached the DoT to take firm measures in this regard, and we are pleased to note that the collective efforts have borne fruit.

The recent guidelines issued by DoT for dealing with the matters pertaining to unauthorized boosters/repeaters which are causing harmful interference to telecom services are a welcome step in this regard. As per the guidelines, the Wireless Monitoring Organization (WMO) will be inspecting sites on receiving complaints of interference and can take penal action against those who do not remove or surrender such illegal equipment on being notified by the Government. Further, the sale of such illegal equipment should also be banned with immediate effect, as the grey market and online e-commerce stores continue to make them available to users.



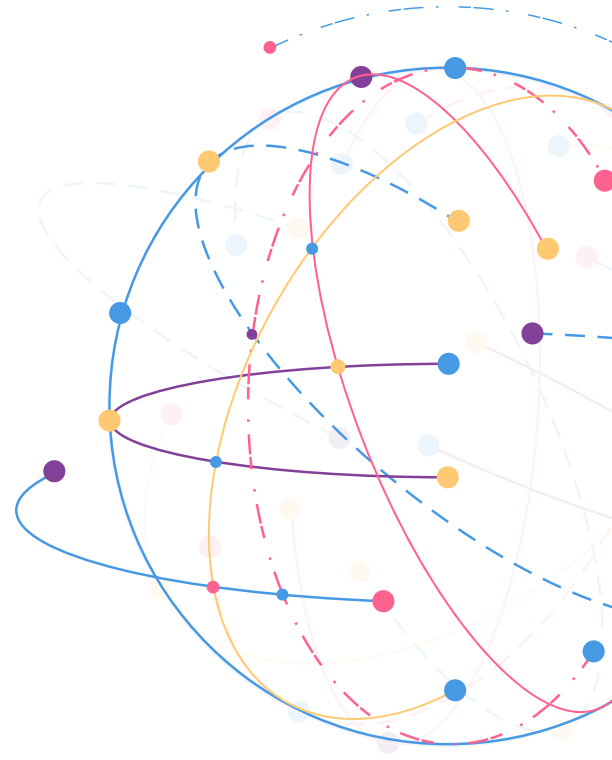
India's recent win of the "Government Leadership Award" at the GSMA's Mobile World Congress 2023 at Barcelona, reflects the progressive efforts taken towards the telecom industry in our country and is a testament to the world-class leadership in the establishment of sound regulatory policies for mobile connectivity. COAI warmly compliments and congratulates the Union Minister of Communications & IT, the Minister of State for Communications, the Telecom Secretary, as well as the entire Department of Telecommunications and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India for this award. We are also looking forward to playing our role in taking the Indian telecom sector to further heights.

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



COAI

Latest Updates:



Abolition of USOF Levy

COAI submitted a Letter to DoT on 22nd March 2023, requesting USO Levy to be abolished and substantiating the same with international practices.

25 Tariff Plans

COAI submitted the Letter to TRAI on 07th March 2023, requesting the Authority that mandated Tariff Plans need to be kept out of the purview of the prevailing ceiling of 25 retail tariff plans.

Relaxation of restrictive features of M2M services

COAI wrote to DoT on 30th December 2022, requesting to ease the restrictions on the number of IPs and URLs that can be accessed from M2M SIMs. DoT convened a meeting on 16th March 2023, and subsequently, vide its letter dated 22nd March 2023, has circulated a list of critical M2M services and sought industry inputs by 15th April 2023. Further, vide its letter dated 24th March 2023, DoT has sought inputs on restrictive features on M2M services by 10th April 2023.

Re-evaluation of permission for Smart Grid deployment via RF Mesh using unlicensed band (865-868 MHz)

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 10th March 2023, requesting to immediately recommend to the Ministry of Power to use licensed spectrum bands and the infrastructure created under the telecom license for deployment of Smart Grid.

TRAI CP on Introduction of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider (DCIP) Authorization under Unified License (UL)

TRAI issued this consultation paper on 09th February 2023, wherein comments were sought by 09th March 2023. Further, an extension for responding to the CP was granted until 6th April 2023. The draft response is under preparation.

Guidelines for Audit of the Metering and Billing System and accuracy of Metering and Billing in LSA

TRAI released Draft Regulation on Review of The Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2023 on 24th February 2023, and time was granted till 07th April 2023, to respond to the same. The matter is under discussion with the members.

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

COAI had submitted its preliminary inputs to TEC in this regard on 02nd February 2023. As discussed with members, COAI will be further submitting a letter to TEC, requesting to put in abeyance the release of the GR till the 5G EMF TSTP is released.

Request Extension in Date for Submission of EMF Self certificates

DoT had issued an order on 04th April 2022, wherein the timeline for the submission of self-certificates of new BTS and upgradation cases for conformity to EMF exposure was extended till 15th April 2023. In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT requesting that the EMF exposure compliance requirements be held in abeyance for further 9 months i.e., till 15th January 2024.

Action Plan on Circular Economy in Telecom Sector

A meeting was held in MoEFCC to discuss the E-waste (Management) Rules, 2022 related concerns, wherein COAI highlighted the concerns related to the directions.

CLC Meeting

Regular meetings of the CLC are being held. Currently, the CLC is working on the revision of the fees for maintenance of Tarang Sanchar portal by M/s Ramboll.

TRAI CP on Regulating Converged Digital Technologies and Services - Enabling Convergence of Carriage of Broadcasting and Telecommunication services

A meeting was held with members on 20th March 2023, to discuss the Draft COAI response prepared. Members have provided their inputs on the same and the response is being finalized accordingly. TRAI has extended the timeline to respond to this CP till 3rd April 2023.

Right of Way Policy amendments issuance

Assam released its RoW policy on 14th March 2023. The policy is primarily in sync with the central RoW amendments 2022. Similarly, IT Department, Govt. of J&K notified the "Jammu & Kashmir Communication & Connectivity Infrastructure Policy (Amendment) Rules, 2023" and Ladakh Administration notified the "Ladakh Communication and Connectivity Infrastructure (Amendment) Policy, 2022". The policies are aligned to the RoW (Amendment) Rules, 2022.

Draft policies circulated for stakeholders' comments:

Cellular Tower Policy was released by NDMC, inviting public comments/suggestions. COAI has collated inputs from members for making a formal submission to NDMC. Nagaland also released its draft RoW policy on 22nd March 2023, for stakeholder consultation. The draft policy is primarily in sync with the central RoW amendments 2022. COAI will be making a formal submission on the minor changes suggested by members.

EMF Awareness Workshop:

Delhi LSA organised a physical EMF awareness program in the premises of Ghaziabad Development Authority on 28th March 2023. The event was attended by various departments of the Ghaziabad administration and also public representatives. Dr. T.K. Joshi and Delhi LSA enlightened the audience about the subject. West Bengal LSA organized a physical EMF awareness program at Diamond Harbour Women's University, Kolkata. A good number of students and faculty were made aware about the topic and the mobile tower emissions related misconceptions were allayed by the West Bengal LSA and Dr. Suresh Athilli. COAI and its members supported both the events.

Uttar Pradesh SBC Meeting

Uttar Pradesh SBC Meeting was held on 13th March 2023, under the chairmanship of Shri Durga Shankar Mishra, IAS (Chief Secretary, UP). COAI requested for aligning UPROW policy with DoT RoW Amendment Rules 2022, and highlighted various industry issues like High Aerial OFC Charges, High Restoration Charges and Policy Implementation Challenges.

Training of Parivesh 2.0

Hands-on training session on PARIVESH 2.0 was held on 14th March 2023 at MoEF&CC office, New Delhi. Members took benefit of this training and cleared all their doubts.

Submission to Secretary Power on Pole tender by DHBVN

A formal submission was made to Secretary, Power of Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBVN) on the issuance of tender for EB poles on rent at exorbitant charges, which is against the spirit of the RoW 2016 policy of DoT. Basis the association's request, the tender was withdrawn.

Launch of CBuD App

Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi launched the 'Call Before u Dig' (CBuD) app on 22nd March 2023, to facilitate coordination between excavation agencies and underground utility owners to prevent damage to utilities due to digging. It aims to give excavating companies a point of contact, where they can inquire about existing subsurface utilities before starting excavation work. The industry has completely supported the Government in this initiative. Members have been requested to extensively use this app before taking digging activity.

Submission to Chief Secretary, Govt. of Rajasthan regarding Suspension of Internet Services

Letter was submitted on 2nd March 2023, requesting the State Government that any order regarding suspension of internet services be issued in the true spirit and in alignment to the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017, and that the implementation of these Rules be made judiciously during exceptional situations only, as intended. The concern was also shared during in-person meeting with CS on 3rd March 2023.

Letter to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Rajasthan requesting to grant industrial tariff rates on electricity for telecom

COAI wrote to the CS of Rajasthan Government on 2nd March 2023, requesting to grant industrial rates for the telecom industry as it will help Rajasthan propel telecom and data services, apart from overall industrial development, crucial services such as tourism, m-governance, m-banking, m-health, m-education, and the likes could be delivered, while facilitating the march towards the vision of achieving a Digital Rajasthan. The request was followed up with an in-person meeting with CS on 3rd March 2023.

Submission to Principal Secretary (UD-2), Govt of Maharashtra requesting for Extension of Time for Regularization

Owing to non-availability of the requisite facility on the concerned portal for registration of existing telecom infrastructure by 31st March 2023, a letter was submitted on 7th March 2023, for consideration on the important issues, keeping in view the timeline given under guidelines issued by Govt. of Maharashtra.

State Level Telecom Coordination meeting held on 7th March 2023, chaired by Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka

COAI brought out important issues to the house. Also, a note on these issues was formally submitted to Mr. S. Ravikumar, Dir., DoT Karnataka LSA for further taking up, as requested.

Submission to CMD TSSPDCL & TSNPDCL on EB Regulation

COAI made submission to Chairmen and MD of TSSPDCL and TSNPDCL on 14th March 2023, as a response to the observation raised against COAI submission on the FOAI reference.

Meeting request to Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra

A letter has been written to Hon'ble Deputy CM of Maharashtra on 14th March 2023, requesting for an industry meeting on concerns related to Roll-Out of Telecom Infrastructure in the state.

Letter to Chief Secretary, Govt. of Chhattisgarh regarding Implementation of RoW Amendments issued by GoI in Aug 2022

A repeat submission was made to Chief Secretary, Govt. of Chhattisgarh, requesting for early adoption of RoW Amendments notified by DoT on 17th August 2022, in the upcoming RoW Policy to be Notified by Government of Chhattisgarh.

Extension of Time for Regularization of telecom infrastructure in the state of TN

Letter has been written to Principal Secretary (IT), Govt. of Tamil Nadu, requesting for Extension of 6 months for regularization of telecom infrastructure, starting from 31st March 2023. The same was granted by the state government as per their letter dated 31st March 2023.

Letter to Principal Secretary, GoTN regarding Waving Off of Convenience Fee

A repeat request has been made to Principal Secretary (IT), Govt. of Tamil Nadu on 29th March 2023, for withdrawal of Convenience Fee imposed on RoW applications.

Letter to Principal Secretary, GoTN regarding Uniform Restoration Charges

Formal submission made to Principal Secretary (IT) Govt of Tamil Nadu on 29th March 2023, requesting for Uniformity of Restoration Charges across the state and process improvement for granting of RoW permissions.

Letter to Principal Secretary (UD-2) Govt. of Maharashtra regarding Policy related Issues

Letter has been written to Principal Secretary (UD-2), Govt of Maharashtra on 30th March 2023, seeking support in respect of Telecom Infrastructure Guidelines issued in December 2022.



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News Wires:

6 GHz spectrum band key to fast 5G rolls out in India

As it has been established by now, the spectrum is qualified to bring ground-breaking upgrades to the mobile broadband ecosystem. Faster data speed, wider network capacity, efficiency through the low latency and higher reliability, are sure shot maneuvers with the 6 GHz band," says Kochhar.

[Read more](#)



5G era will place skilling on the fast lane

The next-generation telecom network will growth access sectors, creating new opportunities and better job options in India.

[Read more](#)



Telecom Operators raise red flag against govt's unlicensed spectrum for smart grid meters

Telecom service providers through COAI, have written to the government to immediately recommend to the Power Ministry to use the licensed spectrum bands and infrastructure created under the telecom license for smart grid meters. [Read more](#)



Smart metering infra on unlicensed spectrum not safe, says COAI

The COAI has flagged concerns over the deployment of advanced metering infrastructure using unlicensed spectrum in the 865-868 MHz frequency band.

[Read more](#)





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News Wires:

Telcos demand jail for illegal boosters

The use of signal boosters or repeaters is impairing customer experience as they lead to network issues such as call drops and low data speeds.

[Read more](#)



DoT organizes awareness workshop on EMF radiation and mobile towers

The DoT, Delhi License Service Area organized an awareness workshop at Ghaziabad Development Authority, Ghaziabad on “EMF Emissions and Telecom Towers” on March 28th, 2023. [Read more](#)



COAI Events

4th State Broadband Committee- Uttar Pradesh

COAI thanked Shri Durga Shanker Mishra @ChiefSecyUP, IAS (Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh) and @DoT_UPE_LSA for conducting the 4th State Broadband Committee meeting. Deliberations held in the meeting will resolve #RoW related issues and boost #telecom infra in the State including #5Gnetwork.



ET Telecom: 5G Congress

The Govt. is clear in its objective to establish India as a global leader in manufacturing. The strategic approach taken and dynamic policy changes introduced in a pragmatic manner will help achieve this objectives; DG COAI at the #ET5GCongress.

#ETTelecom #5gnetwork #Telecom



Convergence India Expo

Addressing the nuances of adoption of #5G at Convergence, DG COAI said: "1st phase of #5G rollout involves heavy investments from service providers & requires support from Govt. Adaptability of 5G will depend on use cases developed particularly for India & affordability of devices".



COAI Events

EMF Awareness Program

#COAI thanks Sh. Rakesh Kumar Singh, DM Ghaziabad, Vice Chairman, @gdagzb and @dot_delhi_1sa for organizing an EMF Awareness workshop at GDA Conference room today. Such workshops will help allay the myths about #EMF





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