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

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

The pandemic has pushed us towards rapid digitization. Today, about 90% of the services are dependent on the internet, and the trend is fast reaching the remote and rural parts of the country as well. We have seen over 200% increase in rural internet subscriptions between 2015 and 2021, in comparison to 158% in urban areas. In such a scenario, emerging technologies such as 5G assume great importance as they hold massive potential to help enhance India's socio-economic status. 5G is slated to be an enabler for several other verticals – for increasing efficiencies and output across various applications and use cases – whether for governance, businesses and public utilities, as well as in our pursuit of achieving Industry 4.0.

The 5G roll-outs are happening in India at the fastest pace than anywhere in the world. The next phase of adoption is vital, as we expect development of advanced use cases to add to the demand for 5G spectrum for coverage and capacity requirements. In order to meet the massive needs of mobile communications in the 2025-2030 timeframe, it would be critical for Mid-band spectrum like 6 GHz to be identified for IMT in India – to provide a balance of wide coverage and capacity to cater to city-wide 5G use cases, enable rapid and cost-efficient deployments of 5G mobile networks, and in effect, provide an uplift to the GDP.

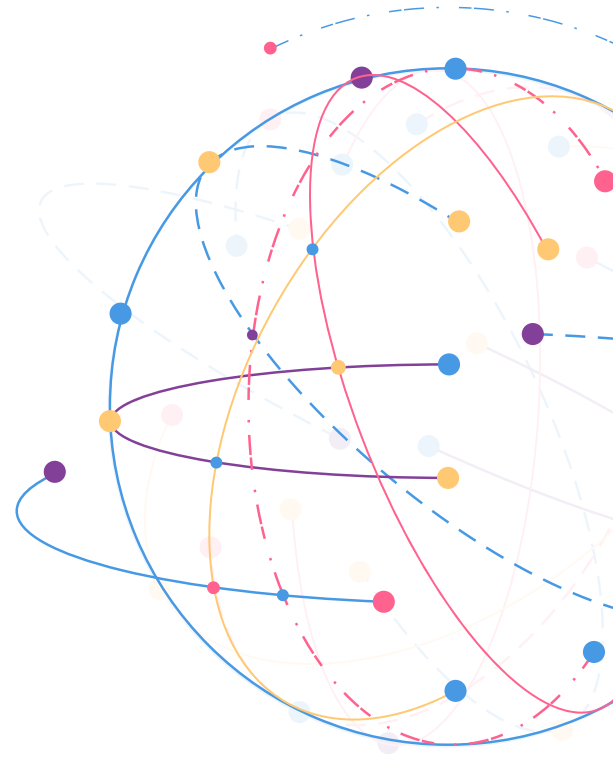
The Union Budget 2023-24 was announced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister on 1st February 2023. While the industry was left wanting in terms of the asks put forward and expected to be addressed by the Government in this budget, some of the announcements made are expected to indirectly have a positive impact on the telecom sector. The budget does lay emphasis on innovation, job creation and skilling, with continued push towards Digital India. Setting up 3 centers of excellence for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and 100 labs in engineering colleges for development of 5G applications are also progressive steps, which would help fuel the proliferation of 5G and its ecosystem in the country. The 33% increase in capital investment outlay to INR 10 lakh crore would hopefully include development of infrastructure for telecom services as well. At the same time, we remain hopeful that the industry's requests for reducing regulatory levies like License Fee, deferring USOF contribution till the existing funds are exhausted, exemption of Basic Customs Duty on Telecom equipment, waiving of GST on regulatory payments, refund of ITC, etc., will be considered and addressed by the Government during the course of the year.

Our heartiest congratulations to the Government of India on being bestowed with the Government Leadership Award 2023 by GSMA for world-class leadership in the establishment of sound regulatory policies for mobile connectivity. This aptly reflects the magnitude of the Government's efforts, approach and focus on evolving into a Digital India, and placing our nation on a leading position in the global map of rapidly advancing digital economies. We are delighted and greatly enthused by this development and look forward to playing our role in helping the Indian Telecom sector scale greater heights going ahead.



COAI

Latest Updates:



Relaxation of restrictive features of M2M services

COAI has written to DoT on 30th Dec 2022, requesting the Authority to ease the restrictions on the number of IPs and URLs that can be accessed from M2M sims. Inputs awaited.

Adjusted Gross Revenue

COAI has submitted a follow up letter to TRAI on 31st Jan 2023, to review the definition of Adjusted Gross Revenue.

TRAI CP on Infrastructure Sharing, Spectrum Sharing and Spectrum Leasing

TRAI issued this Consultation Paper on 13th Jan 2023, seeking stakeholder comments by 10th Feb 2023. However, the time for submission of response has been extended till 03rd March 2023. COAI response on the CP is in process.

TRAI CP on Licensing Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for Submarine Cable Landing in India

TRAI issued this consultation paper on 23rd Dec 2022. COAI response to the CP was submitted on 13th Feb 2023.

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

TRAI issued this consultation paper on 09th Feb 2023, wherein comments have been sought from stakeholders by 09th March 2023 and counter comments by 23rd March 2023. COAI response on the same is under process.

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 Feb 2023.

SoP for checking Grey Market Operations

1. A meeting was held on 27th Jan 2023 on the subject

"SoP for checking Grey Market Operations" with Shri Mukesh Mangal, DDG (SA-II) DoT in DoT Office.

2. In this regard, COAI Letter was submitted on 03rd Feb 2023, suggesting changes required in the said SoP to DoT for consideration.

Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2022 ('IT Rules, 2022')

1. With respect to Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2022 ('IT Rules, 2022') notified on 28th Oct 2022, COAI submitted a letter to MeitY on 08th Feb 2023.
2. In the letter, COAI highlighted that the provisions contained therein will be imposed on applicable intermediaries, who have visibility of the content posted on their platforms and would not be applicable to TSP intermediaries to the extent that the content flowing on the telecom pipes is not visible or known to the TSPs.
3. MeitY, vide its mail dated 08th Feb 2023, agreed to the submission made by COAI.

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

1. TEC Discussion Paper on "Radio Frequency (RF) Electromagnetic Field (EMF) Compliance Assessment of 5G Base Stations" was issued in Nov 2022.
2. In this regard, COAI submitted its comments on 02nd Jan 2023, and additional comments on 09th Feb 2023.

Consultation Paper on Regulating Converged Digital Technologies and Services - Enabling Convergence of Carriage of Broadcasting and Telecommunication services

1. TRAI has issued this Consultation Paper (CP) on 09th Feb 2023, wherein comments have been sought from stakeholders by 27th Feb 2023 and counter-comments by 13th March 2023.

2. In this regard, COAI has sought extension of 6 weeks' time for submitting its response i.e., by 10th April 2023.
3. Accordingly, TRAI has granted 4 weeks extension for stakeholders to respond to this CP i.e., till 27th March 2023.

TSTP for 4G LTE FDD 4G LTE TDD and Formulation of TSTP for 5G Technology roll out

COAI Letter on Network Deployment Map to be published on the Website of TSP for 5G with reference to the "Review of the TSTP for 4G LTE FDD & 4G LTE TDD and Formulation of TSTP for 5G Technology roll out" was submitted to DoT on 20th Feb 2023.

Issues pertaining to Dealer Possession Licence (DPL)

A meeting on the issue of Dealer Possession License was held with WPC (DoT) on 21st Feb 2023. The key asks submitted in the meeting were:

1. To extend the validity of Dealer Possession Licence (DPL) to 5 years instead of the existing 1 year.
2. To make provision for online submission of the DPL Application for any New/Renewal case.
3. The addition of a new address (location) in DPL be integrated with the DGFT portal/ GST Portal for speedy addition of a new/additional business location in the issued DPL.
4. DPL holders be permitted to import radios to support the existing networks under warranty/maintenance contract with the TSPs through Self-Declaration mode.
5. Exemption of the Experimental License for the non-radiating category for locations as mentioned in the issued guidelines.

5G Capacity Building Conference

The conference was held for discussing 5G roll out plan, highlighting the importance of 5G and small cell in the states of - Tamil Nadu on 02nd Feb 2023, Gujarat on 03rd February 2023, Karnataka on 07th Feb 2023, Kerala on 16th Feb 2023 and Uttarakhand on 21st Feb 2023.

Letter to Govt. of Rajasthan to provide Power to Telecom industry under Industrial Tariff Category

A letter has been written to the Principal Secretary, office of the Chief Minister, Govt. of Rajasthan on 17th Feb 2023, requesting to provide Power to the Telecom industry under Industrial Tariff Category. Consequently, an in-person meeting was held with Ms. Arti Dogra, Secretary along with members on 23rd Feb 2023, detailing the industry request.

Letter to Telecom Secretary on integrating State RoW Portals with GatiShakti Sanchar portal

A Letter has been written to Secretary (T), DoT on 22nd Feb 2023, requesting for integration of the State RoW Portals with GatiShakti Sanchar portal, entailing that the payments be facilitated to be made centrally as well.

5th State Broadband Committee (SBC) of Delhi

The 5th SBC of Delhi was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Naresh Kumar (CS, Delhi) on 17th Feb 2023. Industry

concerns were highlighted, including the pending notification of Delhi Policy, CoW Charges in NDMC areas, Permission in O Zone area, Fire NOC being mandated for applying for tower permissions for buildings higher than 15 meters, etc., which were received positively by the chair.

Special Meeting of 3rd SBC of Himachal Pradesh

The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Prabodh Saxena, IAS (CS, HP) on 23rd Feb 2023. COAI highlighted issues like pending notification of the HP Policy being aligned with the 2022 Amendment of the Central RoW Rules, High Restoration Charges, Regularisation of existing infrastructure and OFC Permission by Shimla MC, as part of industry submissions.

Chandigarh Right of Way Policy for Telecom Infrastructure (Amendment), 2023

The industry had worked closely with the Chandigarh administration in developing this policy, which was notified on 17th Feb 2023. The rules introduced in the policy are majorly aligned with the RoW 2022 rules of DoT.

DLTC meetings for Delhi NCR

DLTC meetings were held on 23rd and 24th Feb 2023 in Faridabad, East Delhi, South Delhi and Southwest Delhi. These were attended by COAI representative and Industry issues were highlighted. In Faridabad, the DLTC was organised under the chairmanship of the Additional Deputy Commissioner, with the specific agenda to dispose of the complaints against telecom towers.

Letter to Govt. of Tamil Nadu to withdraw additional charges on RoW

COAI has written to the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu, requesting for withdrawal of the G.O. levying an additional charge of INR 1000/per application while submitting RoW applications in the State portal. This is delaying the Regularization process, which has a deadline of 31st March 2023, as per the state government.

Advocacy on Industrial Tariff for telecom

COAI participated in the new tariff finalization for Gujarat for FY 2023-24, by making a formal submission to the Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission on 02nd Feb 2023. COAI also participated in the Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission's personal hearing session via virtual mode on 28th Feb 2023.



COAI

News Wires:

Setting up labs for 5G applications, CoEs for AI ‘progressive steps’: Telecom associations

While COAI expresses disappointment on the industry asks not met, the Govt. was complimented on positive steps taken towards 5G ecosystem development, skilling and job creation. [Read more](#)



‘Same service, same rules’ — why telcos want regulation for OTT players like Whatsapp, Telegram

Telecom companies reason that OTT players are ‘free riding’ on their infra, OTTs say ‘revenues earned by infra provider should be shared with entity using it in same proportion’. [Read more](#)



Fact-checking the fad for delicensing mid-band spectrum

India needs to secure and plan the availability of the 6 GHz band spectrum to meet the future needs of 5G mobile communications and beyond.

[Read more](#)



Telco’s body COAI bats for more 5G spectrum; says mid band 6 GHz airwaves needed for optimum services quality, costs

COAI cautioned that 5G deployments, speeds and affordability of services will “suffer greatly” if 6GHz spectrum is not allocated to mobile services in India.

[Read more](#)



Difficult to provide state, district wise QoS data as required by TRAI: COAI

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). [Read more](#)



Every Village Could Be Connected To Fibre Soon: COAI DG Lt. General Dr. SP Kochhar To News18 Tech

Lt. General Dr. SP Kochhar, Director General of COAI, discusses India's rapidly changing telecommunications landscape in an exclusive video interview with News18 Tech. [Read more](#)



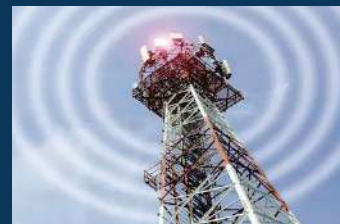
Network usage charge on OTTs fair: COAI

COAI reiterated that the demand by telecom operators for a usage charge over-the-top (OTT) communication apps is fair. [Read more](#)



Mobile World Congress 2023: GSMA hails India's telecom sector reforms with top government leadership award

COAI congratulated the Government of India on being bestowed with the GSMA Government Leadership Award 2023. [Read more](#)



COAI Events

Workshop on 5G Use Case

COAI appreciated Thiru Praveen P. Nair, IAS, Managing Director, ELCOTT, Thiru A. Robert J. Ravi, Chief Technology Officer, Government of Tamil Nadu and the National Broadband Missions for organizing the '5G Use Case Conference' at Chennai.



4th State Broadband Committee – Gujarat

COAI appreciated the support and efforts of Shri Raj Kumar, IAS (Chief Secretary, Gujarat) and Gujarat LSA for conducting the 4th State Broadband Committee meeting.



COAI Events

3rd State Broadband Committee meeting, HP

COAI thanked Shri Prabodh Saxena, IAS (Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh) and the Himachal Pradesh LSA for conducting the 3rd State Broadband Committee meeting.



CRISIL Ratings webinar on the telecom sector: "Signals around the 5G rollout"

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, DG, COAI participated as an Industry Expert in the webinar on 5G Rollout in India, organized by CRISIL.





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