I-DIGEST
Connecting the World

News for you, information that matters

www.coai.in
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**


**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)**

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.
1. A meeting was held on 27th Jan 2023 on the subject SoP for checking Grey Market Operations Accuracy) Regulations, 2023 on 24th Feb 2023. Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing and accuracy of Metering and Billing in LSA March 2023. COAI response on the same is under process. by 09th March 2023 and counter comments by 23rd

2. TRAI has issued this Consultation Paper (CP) on 09th December 2022. In this regard, COAI submitted its comments on 02nd February 2023, suggesting changes required in the said SoP to visible or known to the TSPs.

3. The 5th SBC of Delhi was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Naresh Kumar, CS, Delhi on 17th Feb 2023. Industry payments be facilitated to be made centrally as well.

4. 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.

5. 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 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.
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
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.
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.
Get to know us better. Our social media platforms are a great way to learn about our upcoming events, opportunities, latest trends and more. Follow us and join a diverse group of people across the nation and all around the world.

Follow us on: