



COAI

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I-DIGEST

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LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

Director General, COAI

From DG's Desk

The integration of artificial intelligence in each sector of society has proved its potential to comprehend it in the telecom sector as well. Artificial intelligence stands at the crossroads of innovation and ethics, presenting both transformative benefits and profound challenges. AI's potential to enhance our lives is undoubtedly immense. It has unlocked new knowledge and drives innovations beyond our reach.

However, we need to understand the breach of confidentiality as well. Governments worldwide are increasingly recognizing the need to address AI challenges and are implementing a range of strategies and regulations. Hence focusing on high-risk applications, transparency and safety beyond regulations, standardization of AI practices and technologies, ensure safety and trust. There's no denying the fact that AI embodies a powerful tool that holds immense promise for advancing human welfare, but also possesses significant risk. Hence, balancing these aspects requires a multifaceted approach involving robust regulation, international cooperation and rigorous standardization.

In the Union Budget 2024-25 announced by the Ministry of Finance, COAI recommended for a string of requests for ease of doing business as well as for some relief to this core sector which is increasingly becoming a mainstay in supporting the other sectors in the country. Measures such as abolishing regulatory levies like the contributions to the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and annual gross revenue (AGR), exemption of service tax on additional AGR dues, as well as exemption of customs duty and GST, COAI also requested to reduce custom duties for 4G and 5G network products with 5G expected to catalyze digital transformation across sectors. The industry further urged to prioritize the requirement for a structure development so that the new government can set up a precedent for visionary policy making, driving India towards a robust digital future.

On the contrary, the government's decision to increase Basic Custom Duty from 10%-15% on PCBA will increase the cost of providing services as the telcos are continuously upgrading their networks with the advent of the new technology. Therefore, even though the long-standing demands remain unaddressed, COAI will continue to work with the government for the same.



Regarding the issue of radiation from telecom towers, , COAI has appealed to the Government that if the present level of EMF norms, which are 1/10th of the globally accepted ICNIRP norms, are not revised it, will severely harm consumer experience and will lead to a deteriorated 5G experience due to slower net speed, lower network quality and inferior signal strength. It will also impact the potential aspects to enhance the wireless infrastructure and deployment of 5G. This issue, therefore, needs to be addressed by the Government at the earliest opportunity.

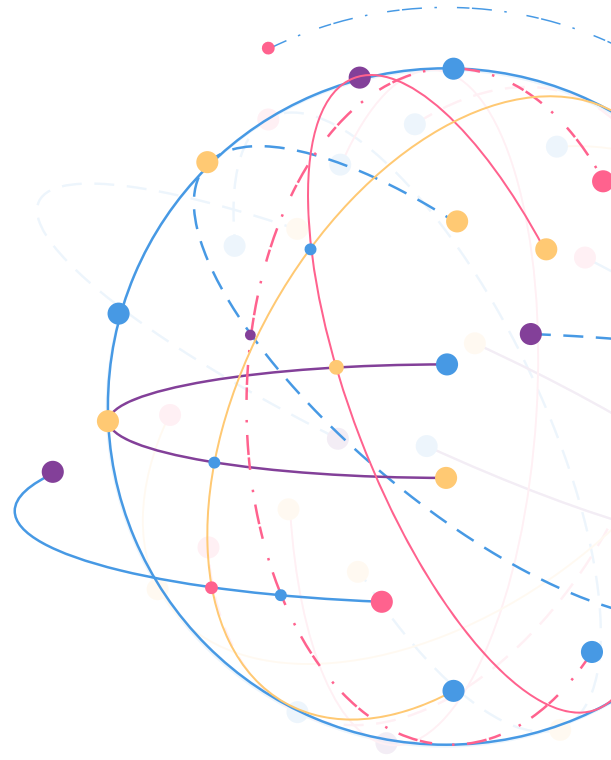
COAI and the Department of Telecommunications jointly organize the India Mobile Congress (IMC), touted as Asia's largest digital technology forum, which unveiled its 2024 theme at a launch event. This year's IMC theme focuses on innovation, industry leadership, and global tech engagement, promising a significant impact on innovators, industry leaders and take enthusiasm are a worldwide.

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



COAI

Latest Updates:



Review of critical key QoS parameters

COAI submitted a letter and note to TRAI to review certain key factors/critical issues which need to be kept in mind by the Authority while formulating the revised Regulations for QoS.

TRAI Consultation Paper on the issues Related to Critical Services in the M2M Sector and Transfer of Ownership of M2M SIMs

TRAI issued the Consultation Paper on 24.06.2024. COAI sought an extension of timeline of 5 weeks for submitting our comments to the various questions raised in the CP.

Inclusion of all languages in IVR and Customer Care Services

COAI has written a letter to DoT not to mandate the requirement of all the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India in the IVR and Customer Care Services.

TRAI Consultation Paper on the Framework for Service Authorisations to be Granted Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023

TRAI issued the Consultation Paper on 11.07.2024. COAI has sought extension of timeline of 4 weeks for submitting our comments to the various questions raised in the CP.

Draft Study Paper on Opportunities for AI in Communication Networks

TEC released the Draft Study Paper as a part of the Annual Action Plan for the year 2024-2025. COAI submitted its response on the Draft Study Paper on 20.06.2024.

Draft Guidelines for the Prevention and Regulation of Unsolicited and Unwarranted Business Communication, 2024

The Draft Guidelines were released by Department of Consumer Affairs. COAI submitted a letter to DoCA on

22.07.2024 formally accepting the Draft Guidelines in their entirety.

Joint Letter submission (MAIT and COAI) to DoT

COAI submitted a letter regarding the stringent timelines for security certification of telecom products under ComSec on 02.07.2024.

Specific Absorption Rate value

COAI made a submission on Digital display of information related to Specific Absorption Rate value and safety precautions in the Manufacturer's mobile handset booklet to the Investment Promotion Cell of DoT on 15.07.2024.

Implementation of MTCTE Phase IV – PTP PMP Microwave Fixed Radio System

COAI submitted a letter on 20.07.2024, requesting for an extension for three months on Phase IV – PTP PMP Microwave Fixed Radio System.

National Broadband Mission 2.0 Targets and Challenges

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 01.07.2024, on NBM 2.0 Targets and Challenges. COAI highlighted proposed targets under NBM 2.0, various steps for the acceleration of the network deployment, ways to accelerate RoW permissions in rural and forest areas, various ways through which the state governments may enable Green Open Access for TSPs and Tower Companies.

Complete ban on Illegal 6 GHz Wi-Fi CPES

COAI submitted a letter to DPIIT and DoCA on 02.07.2024, requesting for a complete ban on Illegal 6 GHz Wi-Fi CPES being made available in the Indian market

Support for removal of cost burden on TSPs towards fulfilling requirements of National Security and Law Enforcement

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 09.07.2024, requesting

support for removal of cost burden on TSPs towards fulfilling requirements of National Security and Law Enforcement.

Revised Draft Standard titled "Standard for assessment of Electromagnetic Field Exposure from Telecom Base Stations"

COAI submitted comments to TEC on the revised Draft standard on EMF dated 15.07.2024. Key Action points for COAI:

- i. COAI/TSP to work closely with Delhi LSA for more field measurements.
- ii. COAI/TSP to provide supporting documents for FSM and K factor.
- iii. Queries sent to GSMA to seek guidance and other country approaches to the above action items.

Review of Compliance Requirements by TSPs due to Upgrades/Additions by Other TSPs (OTS) as per TEC Test Procedure (TSTP) of August 2021

COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 22.07.2024, requesting that penalty for any non-compliance in the EMF Self certificate should only be levied on the originator TSP undertaking the upgrade/addition and not the other TSPs.

Submission to Kerala Government for reconsidering existing Pole Rent charges

A submission was made to the Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala on 19.07.2024, highlighting the industry concern about state Right of Way (RoW) policy, dated 07.06.2024, which has left the charges for pole rents to be decided by the departments, rather than specifying the rate as prescribed in RoW Rules 2016.

Request for in-person meeting with Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra

A request has been made to Chief Secretary, Maharashtra on 19.07.2024, requesting for Industry meeting, to discuss industry challenges in the state.

4th SBC of Tamil Nadu

the 4th State Broadband Committee meeting of Tamil Nadu was Chaired by the Chief Secretary on 08.07.2024. Industry issues like Adoption of Green Energy Open Access (GEOA), inclusion of Telecom Industry under Industrial Tariff category for providing Electricity, permission denial for 5G deployment in Madurai, Common rates for restoration charges, etc. were raised by COAI. Subsequently, a formal submission was made to the office of CS on 16.07.2024.

Submission to Member (T) on LT consumer meters

A letter was submitted to Member (T) on 05.07.2024, requesting support for the industry in getting the requisite amendments in the metering regulations notified from Central Electricity Authority (CEA) including - a. Issue metering guidelines for consumers on Voltage levels less than 11 KVA to use GEOA and, b. Instructions for installation of smart meters for all such users.

Submission to Chairperson, Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission

COAI objection to Draft Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (Promotion of Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access) Regulations, 2024 was made on 05.07.2024, whereby it was requested to consider LT consumers also under GEOA eligibility while defining metering & scheduling guideline applicable to LT consumers.

Meeting with Chairman MERC Mumbai

An in-person meeting was held with the Chairman of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission on 09.07.2024, to discuss Composite Billing. The meeting was attended by Mumbai LSA, industry members from IP-Is and TSPs, wherein COAI was represented by DDG.

Letters regarding adoption of the Green Energy Open Access (GEOA) amendment

Repeat submissions were made to the Electricity Regulatory Commissions of Assam, Sikkim and Tripura, on 05.07.2024, 10.07.2024 and 11.07.2024 respectively, requesting for adoption of GEOA amendments issued by the Ministry of Power.

8th State Broadband Committee Meeting of Arunachal Pradesh

SBC meeting was held on 09.07.2024, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of Arunachal Pradesh. It was highlighted that the composite billing scheme has been implemented in the state for electricity bills.

Right of Way Rules 2024, Draft

The DoT issued draft of the Right of Way Rules 2024 on 09.07.2024. Meetings were held with members on 16.07.2024 and 23.07.2024, to discuss the draft of the Rules issued by DoT under the Telecom Act 2023. Post incorporating all the industry inputs, COAI plans to submit the feedback to the department within the prescribed timeline of one month.

Submission on Chandigarh Tariff Filling for FY 2024-25

A COAI letter was submitted to JERC on 01.07.2024, regarding Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) and Tariff Proposal of FY 2024-25. Electricity tariff in commercial category has increased by 20%, which is being opposed by the industry.

DG Set New Compliance norms in Delhi NCR

A meeting was held on 10.07.2024, under the Chairmanship of Shri Arvind Nautiyal, Member Secretary, Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR (CAQM), to review the Status of piped gas connectivity and progress on retro fitment of dual fuel kits, RECDs and CPCB4.0 DG sets in Delhi NCR. Member Secretary requested the telecom industry to provide specific challenges/issues which needs the Commission's support.

Meeting with Central Electricity Authority (CEA) on Metering Regulations

A meeting was held on 08.07.2024, with Member (GO&D), CEA, regarding the notification of metering regulations for Low Tension (LT) consumers, i.e. consumers connected on less than 11 KV voltage. This notification is essential for adoption of Green Energy Open Access (GEOA) by the industry.

5th SBC Meeting of Himachal Pradesh

The 5th State Broadband Committee meeting of Himachal Pradesh State was held under the chairmanship of Shri Prabodh Saxena (CS) on 24.07.2024. COAI highlighted industry challenges of alignment to RoW Rules 2022 & 2023 amendments, High Restoration Charges, implementation of GEOA and Composite Billing in the State.

SBC Meeting of Uttar Pradesh

The State Broadband Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh on 22.07.2024. Various RoW issues of the industry were highlighted by the LSA, including, Implementation of UPROW Rules by Local Bodies, High Restoration Charges, Implementation of GEOA and Composite Billing in the State.

Submission on UP Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC) on Tariff Filing for FY 2024-25

A COAI letter was submitted to UPERC on 22.07.2024, about Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) for FY 2024-25. The industry, in its submission, request edUPERC not raise tariff for Telecom consumers.

7th SBC Meeting of Delhi

The 07th State Broadband Committee meeting of Delhi was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Delhi on 09.07.2024. Various industry challenges were highlighted, including Exorbitant charges for usage of poles by DISCOMs, Tower Charges in MCD area, and other RoW related issues.

TIC Quarterly Meeting

Quarterly TIC meeting was held on 23.07.2024. New Chairperson and Vice Chairperson was inducted. Constructive discussions were held on RoW issues and Power related challenges of the industry.

COAI Submission to Chief Secretary Delhi on Pole charges

A submission was made to Chief Secretary, Delhi on 19.07.2024, regarding alignment of pole charges by DISCOMS as per Delhi RoW Policy dated 01.11.2023.

COAI Submission to Chief Secretary Jharkhand on Pole charges

A reminder submission was made to Chief Secretary, Jharkhand on 25.07.2024, highlighting the high charges and seeking industry meeting for alignment of pole charges by DISCOMS.

COAI Submission to Secretary Telecom on Mobile Tower License Fee on Government building

A submission has been made to Secretary (Telecom) on 26.07.2024, seeking his support regarding fixing of license fee for towers (rentals) installed on Government buildings in Delhi.

Review Meeting on RoW Pendency

A review meeting was conducted under the chairmanship of the DDGR, Punjab LSA regarding RoW pendency and related issues in Punjab and Chandigarh on 24.07.2024. The meeting was attended by COAI and Circle TSP/IP members who raised various issues causing permission delays.

Meeting with DDG (Satellite & Sustainability), DoT

A meeting was held with Mr. Arun Agarwal, DDG, explaining the industry demand on getting Electricity Meter regulations amended for LT consumers to avail the benefit of Green Energy Open Access on 30.07.2024.

Meeting with Haryana DISCOMs and LSA on Electricity related facilitation

An industry meeting was held on 30.07.2024, with DISCOMs of Haryana (UHBVN and DHBVN), along with Haryana LSA, discussing the implementation of Composite Billing and KVA billing for the industry. The deliberations were fruitful and positive outcomes are expected.

Abolition of Equalization Levy

Under the existing law, a non-resident e-commerce operator is liable to pay equalization levy (EL) at the rate of 2% from e-commerce supply or services. To avoid ambiguity and reduce the compliance burden, Budget 2024 proposes to abolish the EL of 2% with effect from 01.08.2024. This will help in reducing blockage of funds, reduce litigation and ease doing compliance. Case for this was taken up by COAI with the government.

Custom Duty – Review of Exemptions

Clarification(s) were made regarding activities relating to cable repair/installation operations carried out in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):

- i. Telecom companies heavily depend on submarine cables for the high-speed transfer of data around the globe. The current customs duty exemption granted to vessels engaged in laying submarine cables in India is set to expire on 30.09.2024.
- ii. COAI had requested the government that it is imperative to extend this exemption to prevent a substantial increase in the costs associated with cable laying. Such an increase could adversely affect the future deployment of submarine cables, potentially compromising the quality of service provided to customers.
- iii. Vide notification no. 30-2024, validity of exemptions which was lapsing on 30.09.2024, is being extended up to 31.03.2026. This will help in ease doing

compliances.

- iv. This will help in reducing litigation and will help in ease doing compliance. Case for this was taken up by COAI as part of pre-budget recommendations and the same was discussed during the meeting with the concerned senior officials in the MoF.

Custom duty on Telecommunication Equipment's

In the Union Budget, The Government has proposed to increase the basic customs duty from 10 to 15 per cent on PCBA of specified telecom equipment. This will increase cost of providing services as Telcos are continuously upgrading their networks with the advent of the new technology. To alleviate the cost challenges associated with deploying this critical infrastructure, COAI is requesting the government to withdraw this increase of additional duty.

GST Issue - There is ambiguity on the interpretation of the date from which interest needs to be calculated in case recipient fails to make payment to the vendor within 180 days from the date of invoice. COAI has requested the government to issue a suitable clarification.

GST - Denial of Input Tax Credit on equipment installed on telecom towers

Some of the field formations, are questioning the admissibility of ITC on the most elemental component of telecom network infrastructure, i.e., the telecom equipment installed on towers that includes radio equipment, transmission, and reception apparatus, BTS etc. COAI has again requested the government to issue a suitable clarification on this issue.



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News Wires:

Telecommunication companies urge for alignment with international standards:

While recommending a 10-fold increase in EMF emissions from mobile towers, a government committee in its report also noted that the measure may adversely impact the public opinion and lead to mistrust. [Read more](#)



Indian Telecom industry awaits the next frontier in communications through policy reforms:

The telecom industry has submitted a few policy recommendations to the Ministry of Communications, which are crucial for achieving the Government's vision of digital empowerment and inclusivity. [Read more](#)



Recipe for AI: Government see the need for regulation and benchmarking:

Beyond regulation, standardization of artificial intelligence practices and technologies ensue safety, interoperability and trust.

[Read more](#)



Edge AI and its impact on network infrastructure:

The incredible advancements in communication technologies and rapid proliferation of smartphones, IoT devices, 5G networks and real-time data processing have led to an unprecedented surge in data generation.

[Read more](#)



Telcos seek abolition of USO levy, reduction in license fee:

Alternatively, the government may consider the suspension of the USO contribution of 5% AGR till the existing USO corpus of approximately Rs. 80, 000 crore is exhausted.

[Read more](#)





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News Wires:

Telcos calls for tax reforms in telecom sector in Union Budget 2024-25:

In their budget recommendations to the Finance Ministry, telecom services providers have called for the introduction of a special regime for the telecom operators allowing them to carry forward and set off business losses for up to 16 assessment years.

[Read more](#)



Hike in customs duty on telecom equipment to raise cost of telecom services in India:

The increase in basic customs duty from 10% to 15% on certain specified telecom equipment will increase the cost of providing services for TSPs.

[Read more](#)



COAI Events

India Mobile Congress 2024 – Theme Launch

India Mobile Congress is the largest digital technology forum in Asia. 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. IMC 2024 will bring an urgent and engaging narrative, reminding that the technologies we once dreamed of are now an active part of our daily lives and will encourage attendees to delve into the latest advancements in domains like 6G, AI, Semiconductors, Broadcasting, Electronics manufacturing, Satcom, Quantum, and Security etc.

The theme of the India Mobile Congress 2024, 'The Future is Now', was unveiled by Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Development of Northeastern Region. Mr. Abhijit Kishore, Chairman, COAI welcomed the gathering with his address.



National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF) Capacity Building Workshop on the New Telecom Act 2024

Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar, DG, COAI, led the second day of the Capacity Building Workshop on Telecom Act 2023. He engaged with the National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF) leadership and staff to discuss industry perspectives on the Telecom Act 2023. The National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF) is an apex level training institute, operating under the aegis of the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, which caters to the training needs of Indian Posts and Telecom Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TAFS) officers. the gathering with his address.





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