



**COAI**

**ISSUE  
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# **I-DIGEST**

**Connecting the World**

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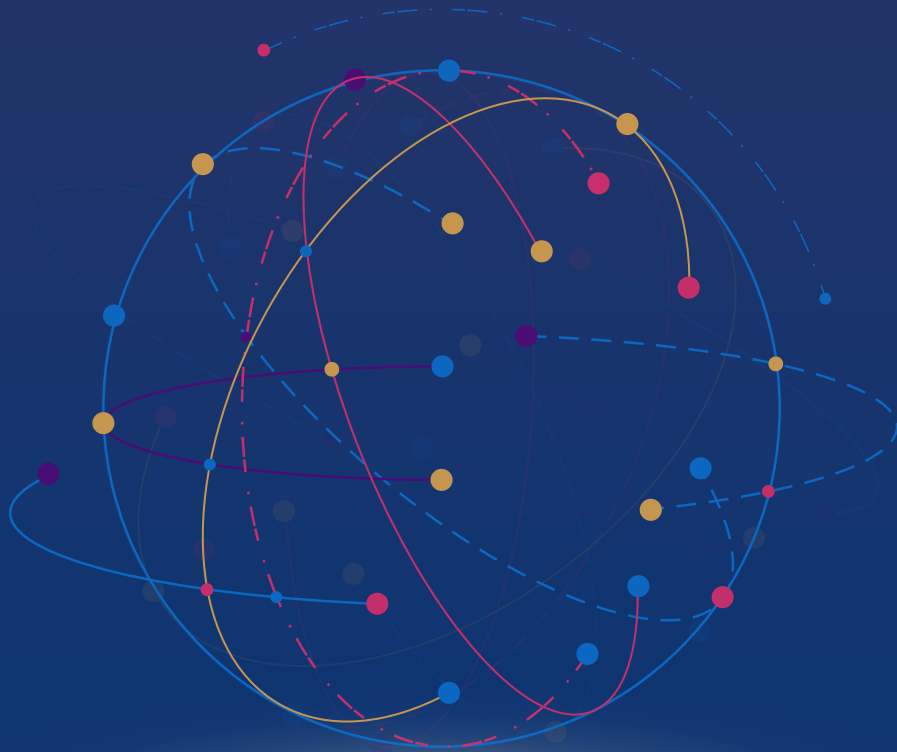
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## LT. GEN DR. SP KOCHHAR (RETD.)

### Director General, COAI

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#### From DG's Desk

October ritually heralds the festive season, a time of unity, hope and celebration. From a telecom perspective though, October marks the hosting of a grandiose event, the Indian Mobile Congress (IMC), a celebration of India's progress in the field of telecommunications and technology. This year's eighth edition of the IMC coincided with World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), the governing conference of the ITU, underscoring India's central role on the global telecom stage.

IMC 2024 revolved around the theme "The Future is Now", where tech startups, telecom companies and innovators highlighted the advancements in Quantum Technology and Circular Economy along with spotlight on 6G, 5G use-case showcase, cloud & edge computing, IoT, semiconductors, cybersecurity, green tech, satcom and electronics manufacturing. This emphasis on futuristic innovations reflects our national strides towards self-reliance with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat encouraging Indian solutions to global challenges and establishing new standards in tech resilience.

Just like previous years, COAI IMC 2024 participated in discourses with global and national experts on the future of digital infrastructure, the importance of cybersecurity and the balance of digital demand. COAI emphasized on cybersecurity being an integral part of the digital fabric and that telecom networks need to adopt robust security measures for national security and economic stability. Aligning with PM Modi's call for a stronger cyber-security framework we emphasized the necessity for government leadership in setting these security standards, which the industry is ready to support. We also highlighted the need for modern regulatory frameworks, leveraging public-private partnerships to harness expertise in emerging technologies like AI and blockchain, ensuring our policies remain future-ready and adaptable.

However, a significant highlight was the panel discussion on the balance of digital demand where we stayed steadfast in our resolve to ensure that Large Traffic Generators (LTGs) contribute their fair share towards the infrastructure that not only supports, but also propels their services. It is a call for a collaborative approach to sustain and enhance the telecom network backbone that supports the burgeoning digital traffic. Our point was acknowledged by some LTG representatives who harped on the impact of increasing network costs due to advancing technologies and expressed openness to exploring consumer-friendly solutions, offering hope for a balanced approach to the fair share issue.



On the 5G front, while we have seen 5G rollout completing two years in India and boasting the fastest rollout worldwide, it is however pertinent to say that the ROI hasn't materialized yet. The hope of machine and human interaction didn't work out as use cases did not come up and therefore enterprise 5G did not see much take up. The situation mirrors a global trend as the hype was driven by manufacturers of 5G and countries rode on that to take lead. Consequently, telecom companies in India are focusing their resources on sustainable growth objectives, while awaiting profitable applications for 5G.

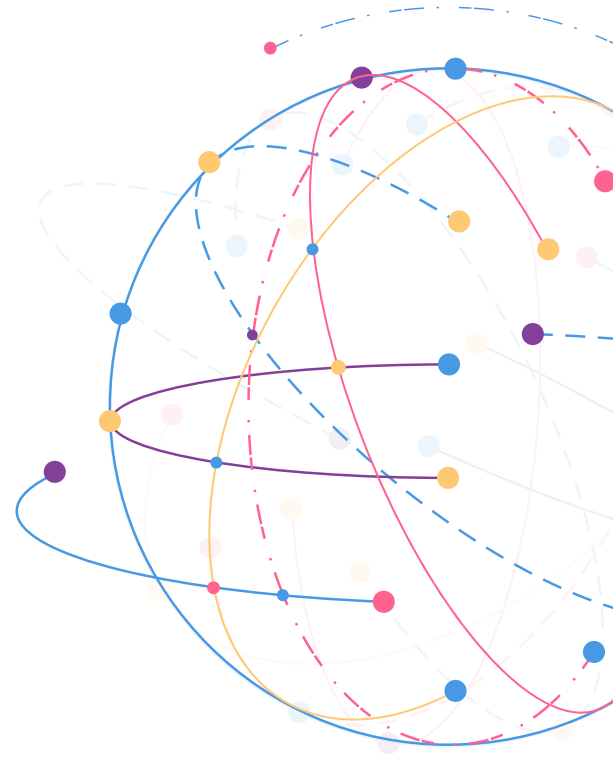
While India is poised to shape the future of 6G, it is important to focus on cybersecurity to ensure that our networks remain resilient, secure and capable of handling next-generation challenges. Strong cybersecurity measures will not only protect sensitive data and national interests but also build trust among users and international stakeholders, setting a robust foundation for a connected, secure future in the digital age.

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



# COAI

## Latest Updates:



### **Letter to DoT on TRAI Recommendation on Authorization**

We have submitted letter to DoT on 14.10.2024, covering our concern regarding increasing the scope of ISP Licenses, not retaining the existing Contractual nature of Licenses and omission of OTT Communication Services from Licensing/Authorization.

### **Letter to DoT regarding recent amendments to the PM-WANI Framework**

We have submitted a letter to DoT on 17.10.2024, seeking attention towards our concern related to Regulatory Imbalance in respect to PDOAs, Violation of the 'Level Playing Field', Favouring Big Tech Over Licensed Service Providers and Anti-Competitive Nature of TRAI's Draft Tariff Order.

### **Consultation Paper on Review of Telecom Consumer Protection Regulation (TCPR), 2012**

An OHD was held on 21.10.2024, during which we suggested that color coding for physical vouchers has become irrelevant in today's digital era. We also recommended that denominations of Rs. 10 and its multiples should be permitted for STVs, CVs, and Plan Vouchers in addition to Top-up vouchers. Additionally, we emphasized that there is no need for Voice and SMS-only plans.

### **Consultation Paper on Review of the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulation, 2018**

We have submitted our response to consultation paper on 09.10.2024. We have pointed out the Initiatives taken by the Telecom Industry in scrubbing UCC, optimum approaches to handle UCC, Regulations to Regulate PEs and TM-D, concern regarding the cost of technological upgrades, training, and onboarding processes and shifting of traffic to OTTs.

### **Regarding additional reports, including prediction maps, being sought by LSA Units**

- This is regarding additional reports, including prediction maps, being sought by LSA Units from member TSPs.
- In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 04.10.2024 requesting that DoT may kindly use the data already available from the Tarang Sanchar Portal, TRAI MySpeed APP, Umang APP and other Portals like Saral Sanchar, etc. and not seek additional data from our member TSPs.

### **Extension in the timelines for Submission of EMF Self certificates and abeyance of 5G Site testing**

- This is with reference to the DoT order issued on 09.07.2024, which extended the timeline for the submission of self-certificates of new Base Transceiver Stations (BTSS) and upgradation cases for conformity to EMF exposure cases until 15.11.2024.
- In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 07.10.2024 requesting a further extension on the matter.

### **Revision of EMF thresholds and completion of ongoing 5G power reduction study**

- This is in reference to the recently published Standard No. 13019:20124 by the TEC for the "Assessment of Electromagnetic Field Exposure from Telecom Base Stations" on 07.10.2024.
- In this regard, COAI submitted a letter to DoT on 15.10.2024 requesting that the published EMF TSP by TEC be kept in abeyance until the EMF thresholds are aligned with ICNIRP.

### **Draft Telecommunication (Procedures and Safeguards for Lawful Interception of Messages) Rules, 2024**

- COAI submitted clause wise response on 04.10.2024 on the Draft Telecommunication (Procedures and Safeguards for Lawful Interception of Messages) Rules, 2024 issued by DoT.
- Further, a meeting was conducted by DoT on 07.10.2024, under the chairmanship of the Additional Secretary (DoT), with the industry stakeholders wherein all the COAI members had put across their respective inputs/points.



## **Draft Telecommunication (Telecom Cyber Security) Rules, 2024**

- a. COAI submitted clause wise response on 04.10.2024 on the Draft Telecommunication (Procedures and Safeguards for Lawful Interception of Messages) Rules, 2024 issued by DoT.
- b. Further, a meeting was conducted by DoT on 08.10.2024, under the chairmanship of the Additional Secretary (DoT), with the industry stakeholders wherein all the COAI members had put across their respective inputs/points.

## **COAI submission to Secretary, DoT on Communication Security Scheme**

A submission was made to the Secretary dated 28.10.2024, requesting for an extension towards implementation of the timelines for the security certification scheme and re-evaluating the declaration letter which needs to be submitted by the Industry.

## **TRAI Open House Discussion on the Consultation Paper on Revision of National Numbering Plan**

COAI participated in the TRAI OHD on the Consultation Paper on Revision of National Numbering Plan held on 08.10.2024 and expressed its views on the Topic.

## **IT Minister's Conference during the IMC24**

Hon'ble Minister of Communication chaired a meeting during the IMC24 on 15.10.2024, wherein Chief Ministers of Arunachal and Meghalaya, IT Ministers and IT secretaries of many states participated. The new RoW Rules 2024 facilitation and IT portal modification was stressed by the department. The states shared their initiatives and achievements, also sought support on certain aspects. DG COAI participated and highlighted the key industry issues and support points.

## **COAI submission to Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh**

A submission was made post the 6th State Broadband Committee (SBC) meeting to the Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh on 30.09.2024. Issues raised during the SBC by COAI were highlighted and support was requested, to boost faster deployment of robust Telecom Infrastructure in the State.

## **COAI letter to Chief Secretary, Telangana**

COAI on 22.10.2024, requested Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana to notify amendment to State Right of Way Policy incorporating all amendments given by DoT, also taking into account the RoW rules 2024 under the Telecommunication Act 2023.

## **COAI submission to DISCOMs of Telangana**

On behalf of Industry COAI on 03.09.2024, submitted its observation on Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) for the FY 2024-25 to 2028-29 & Filing on Proposed Tariff (FPT) and Cross Subsidy Surcharge (CSS) for FY 2024-25 of Telangana DISCOMs, Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGSPDC) and The Northern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited (TGNPDCL). Issue of increased tariff from INR 70/KW to INR 150/KW was highlighted and a request was made to place

Industry under Industrial Tariff.

## **COAI submission to Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission observations**

On 17.10.2024, COAI submitted the industry inputs on Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and Conditions), requesting the commission to allow the use of (Time of Day) ToD meters in place of Availability Based Tariff (ABT) meters for availing the benefits of Green Energy Open Access, for Low Tension Consumers and to consider Ministry of Power (MoP) rules 2022, on permitted banking which defines the permitted quantum of banked energy by the Green Energy Open Access consumers shall be at least thirty percent (30%) of the total monthly consumption of electricity from the distribution licensee by the consumers.

## **News article on Overhead cables in Bengaluru**

The publication Deccan Herald carried an article on 19.10.2024, highlighting the concern related to loose hanging cables in various parts of the city. The story detailed out the prevalence of such practices by cable operators and internet service providers and mentioned some instances which resulted in mis happenings in the past.

## **Discussion with DDG (Rural), LSA Karnataka**

An industry meeting was held on 10.10.2024 with DDG (Rural) and Director (Rural), Karnataka LSA, on member's issues like non-issuance of Right of Way permissions, Exorbitant Poles Charges in Bengaluru, non-refund of security deposit by various civic bodies, Property Tax on the property having mobile towers etc.

## **Submission post Gujarat SBC meeting**

A COAI submission was made on 03.10.2024 post the Gujarat SBC meeting, which was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Gujarat. Issues related to policy alignment, Regularisation issues in Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) area which were raised during the SBC was highlighted in the submission.

## **Submission post Jharkhand SBC meeting**

A COAI submission was made on 30.09.2024 post the Jharkhand SBC meeting, which was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Jharkhand. The submission included the issues of high charges for poles by Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited (JBVNL) and Dhanbad Municipal Corporation, which were raised during the SBC.

## **6th SBC Meeting of Jammu & Kashmir**

SBC meeting of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) Union Territory was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, J&K) on 27.09.2024. Industry issues like Validity of RoW permission, Charges for usage of Street Furniture and Priority Electricity Connection were highlighted.

## **Meeting with Chairman Central Electricity Authority (CEA) on notification of Metering Regulations amendment**

A meeting was held on 04.10.2024 with Chairman, CEA,

regarding support on notification of the amendment to Metering Regulation, so that Low Tension (LT) consumers below 11KV can be facilitated to avail the Green Energy.

### **Green Energy Open Access (GEOA) amendment Rules**

Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission of Union Territories (JERCUTs), for the state of Goa and the Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry and Chandigarh), also the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) have notified the Green Energy Open Access Regulations, allowing consumers having aggregated 100kW load to avail GEOA. Now 21 States, UTs have issued the amendment.

### **Industrial Tariff facilitation by Government of Uttar Pradesh**

Government of Uttar Pradesh has provided "Industry Status" to the IT & IT Enabled Services Sector in its order on 04.10.2024. All New/Existing IT/ITES units consuming minimum 150kW of electricity will now benefit from industrial power tariffs. It is expected that this will help industry for better electricity rates for running their Data Centers etc.

### **10th State Broadband Committee Meeting of Assam**

The State Broadband Committee meeting was conducted on 01.10.2024 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Issues related to the current state RoW policy misalignments and industry concern related to Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) order pertaining to CoW inventory mandate were raised.

### **Submission to Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission**

A letter was written on 03.10.2024 to the Chairman of Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission, giving industry inputs on the draft amendment of Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission (Group Net Metering and Virtual Net Metering for Renewable Energy) Guidelines, 2024.

### **Important meetings in Meghalaya**

The Working Committee under the State Broadband Committee met on 18.10.2024, under the chairmanship of the IT secretary of the state to prepare for the SBC meeting. Industry Issues were raised and got deliberated. Subsequently, the State Broadband Committee meeting was held on 22nd October 2024 under the chairmanship of the Chief secretary of the state. Issues related to state RoW policy's misalignments, industrial tariff and RoW Permissions were raised.

### **Submission to West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission**

A submission was made to the West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission on 22.10.2024, confirming the

proposed amendments to the Draft Green Energy Open Access amendment issued by West Bengal ERC and thanking the commission for including the industry demand of load aggregation in the draft.

### **Jabalpur High Court order**

An order was passed by Hon'ble Jabalpur High Court, allowing the Civic authority to charge an annual fee from the industry on account of monitoring the EMF emission against each tower. The industry has started getting notices from the civic authority, asking them about details of the tower installed. Members have referred the matter to the legal committee for further deliberation. It is understood that individual service providers have filed an appeal and have got a stay.

### **Kerala State Broadband Committee meeting**

The State Broadband Committee meeting was conducted on 25.10.2024 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Issues related to the current industry concern were raised, including, facilitation in RoW permission in Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), Sabarimala, restoration charges rationalization across departments, alignment of pole charges being levied by various Corporations etc. The Chief Secretary was receptive to the industry concerns and directed the officials to take the issues on priority.

### **TRAI released "Rating of Property for Digital Connectivity Regulations, 2024"**

The Authority released the regulations, coming into force from 25.10.2024. The regulations will be applicable on - a). Property Managers who intend to get their property, of minimum specified size, rated for digital connectivity, either voluntarily or under the provisions of applicable laws, rules or regulations can apply on a portal. b). Digital Connectivity Rating Agency (DCRA), who may evaluate and award ratings for property under these regulations; and c). The service providers, who may enter an arrangement with the property manager for development or access of digital connectivity or digital connectivity infrastructure.

### **Denial of Input Tax Credit on equipment installed on telecom towers to telecom service providers**

Recently, RoW Rules 2024, backed by the Telecommunications Act 2023, has the definition of mobile tower.

2(f). "mobile tower" means any above-ground contrivance, including that which may be dismantled and reassembled at another location, used for carrying, suspending or supporting a telecommunication network, but does not include a pole.

The same will be useful in discussing the issue at various levels in the Government.



### 5G roll out has been fast, but there's been no ROI: COAI

Two years after the launch of 5G, while India has seen the fastest rollout of the network, the same cannot be said with regard to return on investments for the operators. Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) director general, SP Kochhar tells FE that enterprise use cases did not pick up as expected.

[Read more](#)



### OTTs are riding on the telecom network, but not sharing revenues with telcos: COAI

Telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Thursday said a tariff hike is essential for a smooth run as telcos are spending more every year on network expansions but not getting enough in return.

[Read more](#)



### Need to frame rules on entry, exit of data from telecom network: COAI DG

The government needs to enforce rules on the entry and exit of data from Indian telecom networks, including that of Over-The-Top (OTT) players, a senior official of the industry body COAI said. [Read more](#)



### India needs 2GHz of spectrum to provide 5G at optimum level: COAI

With the subscriber base that India has, the country needs 2GHz of spectrum to provide 5G at its optimum level. But the industry has got only 800 MHz from the last spectrum auction. [Read more](#)



### Telecommunications: The cornerstone for AI for Good, responsible regulations, & cybersecurity.

Cybercriminals are using AI to launch sophisticated masquerading techniques, capable of deceiving even the most discerning brains. In phishing attacks, they create fake emails mimicking the communication style of the target institution, with all personalized details harvested from social media and other sources. [Read more](#)





### Telecom companies seek cut in license fee

The telecom industry has demanded that the license fee paid by them to the government should be reduced to 0.5% to 1% of the gross revenues, from the current 8%, as the circumstances and regime have changed for the industry.

[Read More](#)



### COAI raises concerns over Trai's recommendations for service authorisations framework

Industry body COAI on Monday voiced concerns over Trai's recent views on the service authorisations framework, saying the contractual nature of present licences must be retained in the authorisation process for regulatory certainty and safeguarding long-term investors.

[Read more](#)





# COAI Events

## INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS 2024

India Mobile Congress (IMC), Asia's largest digital technology forum, is an annual event organized by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). This year, IMC 2024 was held from 15th to 18th October at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Over the years, IMC has firmly established itself as a premier global platform for showcasing cutting-edge innovation and technology. Embracing the theme "The Future is Now," IMC 2024 united global leaders, visionaries, and innovators to collaborate and shape the technologies transforming our world today. The event went beyond being a simple gathering, it was a dynamic hub where forward-thinking ideas are applied to real-world challenges, sparking a digital revolution in real time. Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar participated in various panels during the event, highlighting the current telecom industry landscape and the addressed various challenges.





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