COAI
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I-DIGEST
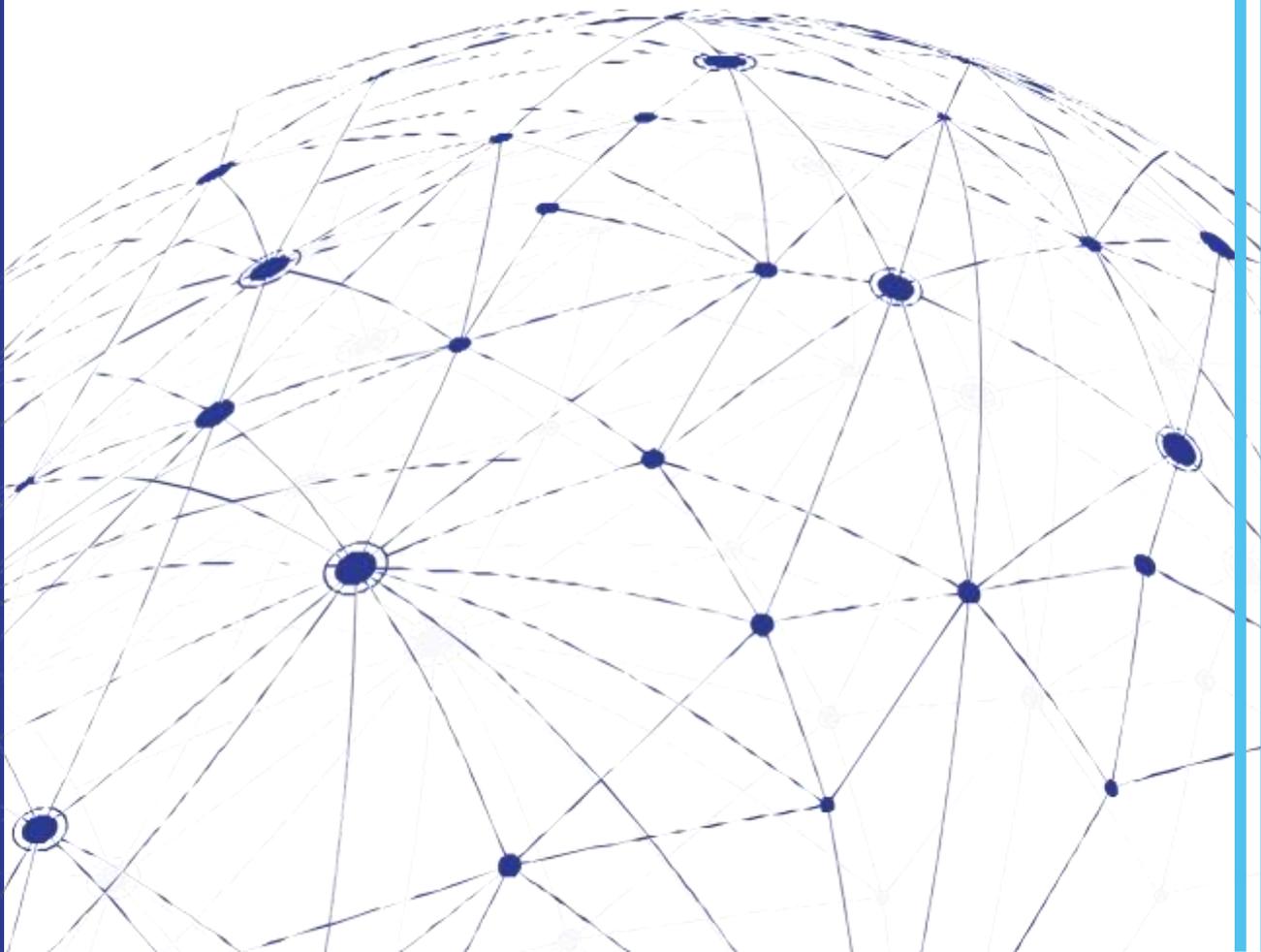
Connecting the World

News for you,
information that matters

CONTENT

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

From DG's Desk

Continuing our efforts in terms of making India more connected and integrated, COAI has been taking several steps in this direction. Apart from constantly coming out with innovative methods to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are several other aspects that need to be focused upon. For example, sale of Illegal repeaters and boosters on e-commerce websites/platforms and outlets is a menace that needs be promptly and appropriately addressed.

Following the trail towards being a developed economy, our visions are truly in place. We have been working on building a roadmap for usage of Radio Frequency Spectrum in India for the next ten years. Innovation, in my opinion, gets cultivated when there is exchange of information and healthy competition. Hosting and participating in Hackathons enables us to get access to different ideas and thought processes and their successful implementations are showcased to the industry.

The primary objective of I-Digest is information availability and continuous circulation of intelligence in the industry and concerned stakeholders. COAI will be devoted to its intention of sustainable growth of digital communications, taking down barriers and finding better ways to get past this storm.

COAI
Latest Updates:

Inclusion of Additional Frequency Range Applicable for Inductive Applications in "Use of Very Low Power Radio Frequency Devices or Equipment

A letter was submitted to DoT 2021 regarding the inclusion of Additional Frequency Ranges Applicable for Inductive Applications in "Use of Very Low Power Radio Frequency Devices or Equipment for Inductive Applications (Exemption from Licensing Requirement) Rules, 2018".

The ETSI standard and ETSI EN 300 330 allows the operations of inductive loop systems in the frequency range of 9 kHz to 30 MHz. This frequency range- in which the wireless charges operate globally and has also been adopted in multiple regions across the world, have not been notified as exempted from licensing requirements for the use of inductive applications in India.

DoT was requested to amend the above referred Gazette Notification and include the frequency ranges from 9kHz-30MHz for Inductive Applications as per ETSI standard ETSI EN 300 330.

Consideration of 3GPP Rel-15 and Rel-16 Specifications
COAI made submission to TEC on February 8, 2021 on the matter. We highlighted that industry and TEC need to work together in ensuring that the necessary ER and GR based on the 3GPP Rel. 15 and 16 specifications are in place for the timely roll out of 5G networks and devices.

We therefore urged TEC to consider these GCS specifications referred (05/22-E approved by ITU-R SG5) at the earliest.

Report of Parliamentary Standing Committee on 'India's Preparedness for 5G'

The observations and recommendations are made by the Parliamentary Committee in this Report which was issued on February 9, 2021. COAI had earlier made presentation to the PSCIT. Committee has noted many concerns raised by COAI and its members, and has directed DoT to take time bound actions on them.

MTCTE Phase 2 Certificates put on Abeyance

COAI made a submission to DoT on February 12, 2021 to lift the abeyance on certificates on PON family and SDH products dispensed to our members for MTCTE Phase 2 at the earliest to enable recommencement of the deployment of OFC based broadband networks.

Review of Biennial Self-Certificates process
DoT has issued notification on February 4, 2021 regarding Review of Biennial Self-Certificates process. The Cycle of Submission has been changed to three years. (Triennial submission). The current cycle will be 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2022.

The triennial submission is not required to be done for which the following certificates have been submitted by TSPs during the three years cycle:
a) Self-Certificates for New BTS
b) Self-Certificates for Upgrade of BTS
c) Self-Certificate due to upgrade/addition of BTSs of other/sharing TSP

This is a favorable DoT notification for the industry and will require modifications in the Portal for such triennial certificate submissions.

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OHD on TRAI CP on Roadmap to Promote Broadband Connectivity and Enhanced Broadband Speed

The Open House was held on February 18, 2021. Points from the Industry were highlighted during the discussion. Additional submissions were also made to TRAI on the same.

Membership to National Study Groups w.r.t ITU-Radio Communication

DoT has decided to form National Study Groups (NSGs) corresponding to ITU- R Study Groups for the study cycle 2019-2023. WPC has invited all major radio frequency spectrum stakeholder organizations for contributing to the NSGs and has sought nominations for these groups.

The last date to submit the nominations to WPC is 28th February 2021.

Enabling Unbundling of Different Layers Through Differential Licensing

TRAI conducted an Open House Discussion on February 3, 2021. In the OHD, COAI stated that:

a) There is no requirement to create a separate category of licenses by separating network and service delivery layers as the present licensing structure supports the layered approach.
b) Unbundling of licenses will make the licensing regime more complex.

National Strategy on Blockchain

COAI submitted its response to MeitY on February 17, 2021. Key points highlighted by COAI in its response are:

i)   Specific legislations and policies which act as bottlenecks to the adoption of blockchain be identified and recommended for reconsideration.
ii)   There is a need to involve telecom industry representatives as important stakeholders in the consultative process.
iii)   The issues of data security, safety and privacy have to be rigorously assessed before the launch of any such project. The guidelines, directives, regulations and laws have to be defined with a clear process of identifying the responsibilities and root causes of any breach.
iv)   Aspects of data governance and data lifecycle management need to be spelled in more detail

v)   Wide scale industry consultations should be carried out on devising an adequate accountability model that eliminates this uncertainty and enables businesses to prosper.
vi)   Framework for Blockchain should avoid any rigid technological specifications and must instantly develop a mechanism to constantly engage with the industry to adopt state of the art technological features.
vii)   Efforts need to be worked upon for high level standardization of technology.
viii)   Deployment architecture needs to be in line with the ownership matrix (RACI) and utilizing the advantage of the Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) as a technology.

Reduction in Regulatory Levies
Submission made to DoT on February 11, 2021, vide which COAI requested that the License Fee should be brought down to 1% at the earliest to cover only the admin costs by the DoT/Government. COAI also provided the compilation of the comparative license fee of select countries highlighting that the India's license Fee % is way above the world average.

TRAI Telecom Subscription data
TRAI released the data as of 31.12.2020 on February 18, 2021. The key data points of the report are as below:
  a) Total subs – 1174 million
        I.   Wireless Subs – 1154 million
        II.   Wireline Subs - 20 million
  b) Urban Subs: 648 million
        I.   Wireless Subs - 630 million
        II.   Wireline Subs – 218 million
  c) Rural Subs: 526 million
        I.   Wireless Subs – 524 million
        II.   Wireline Subs – 2 million
  d) Teledensity: 86.38%
        I.   Wireless Teledensity – 84.90%
        II.   Wireline Teledensity – 1.48%
        III.   Urban Teledensity – 138.34%
        IV.   Rural Teledensity – 59.05%
  e) Broadband Subs - 747 million
        I.   Wireless Broadband Subs – 725 million
        II.   Wireline Broadband Subs – 22 million

B2C QR Code implementation w.e.f. 01 December 2020-Clarification issued by MoF on B2C invoices and compliance

CBIC had mandated that the taxpayers with an annual turnover of more than Rs. 500 crore in any preceding financial year (Starting from 2017-18) are compulsorily required to display QR (Quick Response) code on their B2C invoices from 1st December 2020.

Representation was made by COAI to Hon'ble Finance Minister that Dynamic QR code should not be made applicable to B2C transactions in the Telecom industry, in light of the necessary processes already in place. Alternatively, Dynamic QR code should not be made applicable to transactions where invoice is issued after receipt of payment- in telecom; example, pre-paid transactions or other methods of digital payments enabled by NPCI powered UPI should be accepted in lieu of QR codes like UPI Intent and UPI Collect.

We are happy to inform that CBIC vide circular. No. 146/02/2021 dated February 23, 2021 has clarified the following:

In case of Pre-Paid invoices:

a. The generation/ printing of Dynamic QR Code on B2C invoices are not mandatory for pre-paid invoices i.e., where payment has been made before issuance of the invoice.
b. If cross-reference of the payment received either through electronic mode or through cash or combination thereof is made on the invoice, then the invoice would be deemed to have complied with the requirement of Dynamic QR Code.
c. However, in cases other than pre-paid supply i.e., where payment is made after generation/issuance of the invoice, the supplier shall provide a Dynamic QR Code on the invoice.

This will help in saving IT upgradation and administrative cost and would ease doing compliance.

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Telecom Infrastructure Policy Alignment with RoW Rules, 2016

STATUS

Telecom Infrastructure Policy Alignment with RoW Rules, 2016

Policies notified & Aligned			Draft Policies Released, notification pending	Existing Policies Under Discussion
S.No	State	Notified / Cabinet Approval Date	State	State
1	Jharkhand	04th Dec 2015	Andhra Pradesh	Gujarat
2	Rajasthan	06th Feb 2017	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh
3	*Tripura	08th Sep 2017	Delhi	
4	Odisha	14th Sep 2017	Kerala	
5	**Haryana	06th Oct 2017	Ladakh	
6	Assam	16th Feb 2018	Daman Diu and DNH	
7	Maharashtra	18th Aug 2018	Lakshadweep	
8	*Tamil Nadu	21st Feb 2018		
9	Arunachal Pradesh	15th Jun 2018		
10	Uttar Pradesh	15th Jun 2018		
11	Uttarakhand	26th Nov 2018		
12	Meghalaya	20th Dec 2018		
13	Madhya Pradesh	08th Mar 2019	*G.O Only (Detailed Policy is under discussion)	
14	**Karnataka	29th May 2019	**Policy notified with some clause not aligned with RoW Rules, 2016	
15	Nagaland	02nd Dec 2019	***TSPs to be included in DTC	
16	Manipur	9th Jun 2020		
17	***Bihar	19th Aug 2020		
18	**Goa	20th Aug 2020		
19	Sikkim	12th Nov 2020		
20	J&K	27th Nov 2020		
21	Mizoram	7th Dec 2020		
22	Punjab	7th Dec 2020		
23	West Bengal	Cabinet approval received on 22nd Dec 2020		
24	Andaman & Nicobar	Cabinet approval received on 18th Jan 2020		
25	Himachal Pradesh	9th February 2021		
26	Telangana	19th February 2021		
27	Puducherry	22nd February 2021		
28	Chandigarh UT	1st March 2021		

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News Wires:

Nokia and NIIT Launch First-Of-Its-Kind 5G Certification Program over a webinar with COAI to train and certify Industry Professionals in India

The launch was announced over an industry webinar – "Skilling Digital India for 5G: International Certification Program", organised by COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) together with Nokia and NIIT Ltd. The Keynote address was delivered by Mr. R.K. Pathak, DDG (IC), DoT. Read more

Creating a robust 5G device ecosystem crucial for the success of 5G in India

As India strives to build a connected future around 5G, the device ecosystem for 5G spectrum bands is set to witness the explosive growth in the coming years. Read more

Industry cheers to PLI for telcos; says new scheme to spur jobs, production

Industry body COAI lauded the move saying telecom is the backbone of a digitally-connected India and the initiative will further boost local manufacturing and create job opportunities. Read more

COAI says it's a "bit disappointed" with Budget 2021

Telecom operators are disappointed that their concerns to improve the health of the telecom sector were not addressed in the Union Budget. Read more

COAI

EVENTS

NOKIA and NIIT launch first-of-its-kind 5G certification program over a webinar with COAI to train and certify industry professionals in India

Nokia's 5G certification program launch was announced over an industry webinar – **"Skilling Digital India for 5G: International Certification Program"**, organised by COAI together with Nokia and NIIT Ltd on 24th February, 2021. The webinar witnessed the welcome note by Lt. Gen Dr. SP Kochhar, DG, COAI followed by the keynote address by Mr. R.K. Pathak, DDG (IC), DoT.

The Nokia Bell Labs 5G Certification Program is a first-of-its-kind program that offers professionals across the information and communications technology (ICT) industry two levels of certification – Associate and Professional – that deliver essential knowledge covering everything from the basics of 5G networks to professional level planning and design.

COAI
EVENTS

COAI, GSA and Qualcomm webinar on Device Ecosystem for 5G Spectrum Bands

COAI, GSA and Qualcomm India Private Limited jointly organized a webinar on 19th February, 2021 to discuss the various aspects of the device ecosystem for 5G spectrum bands in terms of deployment, advancement, readiness and challenges faced globally as well as in India. The webinar deliberated on issues such as the availability of 5G devices and components, the critical role played by device makers and suppliers to accelerate 5G adoption in the country, as well as the issues surrounding security and standardization of these devices.

The webinar witnessed the welcome note by Lt. Gen Dr. SP Kochhar, DG, COAI followed by the keynote address and presentation of Ms. Deepa Tyagi, Sr. Deputy Director General, Telecommunication Engineering Center (TEC), DoT and Mr. Stuart Cooke, Chairman – Spectrum Group, GSA respectively.

COAI

The wait is finally over! COAI's quarterly magazine, '**The Communique**' is going to launch in March 2021.
To get featured and make your presence count, reach us at **mchawla@coai.in** or **+91-9650263761**

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