

## **COAI condemns the removal of overhead optical fibre drive undertaken by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in Bangalore**

**Bangalore, January 04th 2022:** COAI, the leading representative body for the Indian telecommunications industry strongly condemns the overhead optical fibre cutting drive undertaken by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). The actions taken up by BBMP, is causing outages and inconvenience to the citizens in densely populated areas across the city.

The cutting of the aerial fibre at this juncture is creating panic not only among TSPs but also among citizens as they are being deprived of avail the essential telecom services. The fibre cut drive is being conducted without prior intimation to TSPs at various locations including Kaggadasapura; Yellankha zone; and Mahadevapura zone. Also, the disconnection of the cable by BBMP is a huge blow to the Digital Bengaluru plan, which will severely impact essential services including Point of Sale purchase applications at retail outlets and various government services in Bengaluru.

Karnataka has over 1,46,300 Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) and 43,900 towers installed to support telephone, mobile and internet communications. TSPs and ISPs were constrained to lay the overhead fibre with the permission of BBMP as and when they were unintentionally cut and removed during various civil works carried out by BBMP, BESCO, BWSSB etc.

COAI, as a representative body, had requested BBMP to grant a reasonable time period of at least 6 months to the member TSPs in order to install the Overhead OFC underground. Since all the OFC were laid after obtaining requisite permission from the concerned authorities and making payment in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

We have requested that no additional fees should be charged from the members for making the overhead OFC underground. Further, till that time no coercive steps need to be taken by the Authorities for removal of the overhead OFC belonging to our member TSPs/ISPs as any such action will have a direct impact on the services being provided by our member TSPs and will create problems for public at large. However, BBMP have again started the fibre cut drive in key areas in Bengaluru.

**Lt. General S.P Kochhar, Director General, COAI,** stated, *“We are disappointed with the unwarranted actions taken by the BBMP to remove the OFC cables. It has led to network outages and has caused inconvenience to customers. This action will also impact overall internet connectivity and businesses, especially IT firms in the city and the people working from Home in the present situation of COVID. While the industry is working to bring the aerial fibre underground, we request the Authorities not to take any coercive steps of fibre cutting and allow the restoration of the infrastructure. We also appeal to the state government and to the BBMP to develop a future-ready framework to enable the delivery of world-class digital connectivity to citizens in the IT capital of India.”*

Telecom is an essential service. At a time when the country should be gearing up for telecom infrastructure deployment in full swing to achieve the facets of the National Broadband Mission, decisions such as these can debilitate the growth. It will take the country back on its agenda of creating a digitally connected India and also pose hurdles for futuristic aspirations of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025.