



Telecom Industry comes together to enhance Network experience for mobile users in Bihar

Patna, October 1, 2015: Heads of leading telecom companies and industry associations COAI, AUSPI and TAIPA, in a press conference today, jointly said that cellular operators were working extensively to improve the network quality to enhance customer experience in Bihar. Reaffirming its commitment to the Government's vision of Digital India, the industry said that with support from the government, operators are committed to improve the networks and provide quality services to the citizens of Bihar.

The industry has undertaken several measures, in order to address the network quality issues. The telecom operators have been working towards improving network coverage and capacity enhancement through expediting capital investment, network optimization, expansion and roll-out of 3G networks to offload traffic from 2G network. Special Drive Tests are being conducted by the operators independently and along with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to analyse the reasons for the call drops and accordingly work towards network optimisation for enhancing quality of service for customers. The industry is also reaching out to customers, seeking their help to identify areas where they face call drops and their suggestions on setting up mobile cell-sites. Efforts by operators are being regularly monitored by DoT and, along with the Government's support; the operators have ensured substantial reduction in call drop rates **in key cities like Patna, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Bhagalpur and Darbhanga in Bihar**. Additionally, more than 800 new cell sites have been installed in Bihar in the last 6 months.

The industry representatives appreciate the Government's support in helping facilitate the development of a robust infrastructure for providing mobility services, by introducing enabling policies. The DoT, under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, in the past few months, has proposed and introduced various policies such as provisioning for permission to install mobile towers at Postal Department offices, on government land and buildings, which would aid the industry in improving the network infrastructure. The DoT has also actively engaged with the Ministry of Urban Development to explore further avenues to help towards upgradation and expansion of the present networks.

Telecom operators have already invested heavily in mobile infrastructure across the country, spending about Rs. 7.5 lakh crore in the past 20 years to provide seamless connectivity to over 950 million mobile users in India. In 2014-15 alone, the industry committed to spend over Rs. 1.34 lakh crore to develop existing networks. Operators also spent Rs. 24,000 crore on capital equipment. The investment has ensured improvement in network coverage and capacity enhancement throughout the country.

Speaking at the conference, **Mr. Rajan S. Mathews, Director General, COAI**, said, *"We believe that consumers deserve the best quality of service and are committed towards delivering the same. The industry is sensitive to the requirements of the consumers and we*



have been working towards improving the network quality, both in terms of quality and capacity, through optimization of present networks and expansion of the same wherever possible. We will continue to put in our best efforts towards this objective and are hopeful that with the requisite support from the government, we will be able to achieve our objective.”

Mr. Ashok Sud, Secretary General, AUSPI, stressed on the importance of a robust telecom infrastructure to provide better quality of services and a superior consumer experience: *“It is important to reiterate the need of a superior telecom infrastructure and it is the responsibility of the entire ecosystem to ensure that drawbacks in the service quality are minimized, so as to meet the needs of the customers. The Industry and the Government must come together to ensure this.”*

Talking about the role tower operators could play in facilitating delivery of quality services through efficient networks, **Mr. T R Dua, Director General, TAIPA** said, *“The industry is committed to providing seamless, uninterrupted connectivity to the people of Bihar, which can only happen through a robust telecom infrastructure. This is also important for implementation of the Government’s vision of a Digital India. We are eager to work at tandem with the State government to address the issue of enabling a requisite mobile infrastructure in the state.”*

There are about 72 million mobile users in Bihar presently and the number is expected to rise substantially in the coming years as a 6% growth rate of the State is the highest in the country. Broadband penetration has also grown substantially in the state, with over 17 million broadband users presently. Mobile networks in the state are reported to be impacted by limited and restricted network and infrastructure presence in some areas. Roadblocks in installation of cell sites and shutting down of operational ones are mainly responsible for causing network congestion and spotty coverage. This is in stark contrast to the requirements of the industry for enabling a digital economy, wherein at least 1 lakh cell sites need to be put up in the next couple of years on a national level. It may also be noted that the cities of Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur & Biharsharif in the State, are part of the 100 Smart Cities agenda of the Government, which requires a robust communications infrastructure to be established.

The industry is committed to the Central Government’s vision for a Digital India enabling digital and social inclusion for the citizens. The industry is thankful to the Ministry of Communications and IT for its belief in the industry’s intent to work for seamless connectivity that will bridge all distances and make every city and village in India a smart one.



About COAI

COAI was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society. COAI's vision is to establish India as the global leader of innovative mobile communications infrastructure, products and services and achieving a national teledensity of 100%, including broadband. The association is also dedicated to the advancement of modern communication and towards delivering the benefits of innovative and affordable mobile communication services to the people of India.

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About AUSPI

Association of Unified Telecom Service Providers of India (AUSPI) is the representative industry body of Unified Access Service Licensees providing CDMA & GSM Mobile Services, Fixed Line Services as well as Value Added Services throughout the length and breadth of the country. AUSPI is a registered society and works as a non-profit organization with the aim of delivering the promise of improved access, coverage and tele-density in India. The objectives of AUSPI include collection and dissemination of knowledge and information for promotion and healthy growth of telecom services, enunciating a telecom vision for India, fueling unprecedented domestic investment, improving tele-density and bringing value for customers.

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About TAIPA

As a critical member of the wireless telecom ecosystem, the key players for Telecom Infrastructure providers have come together to form a representative industry body, Towers and Infrastructure Providers Association (TAIPA). All leading independent telecom infrastructure providers like Bharti Infratel, Viom Networks, Indus Towers, Reliance Infratel, ATC India Tower Corp., GTL Infrastructures, India Telecom Infra and Tower Vision are the founding members of the Society which visualizes itself to be the official voice for the Telecom Infrastructure industry. The Association interacts and deliberates with the Ministries, Policy Makers, Regulators, Financial institutions and Technical bodies for collection and dissemination of knowledge and information for promotion of healthy growth in telecom services.

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