BIF™

BROADBAND INDIA FORUM

"Think Tank for Digital Transformation"

Annual Report

2025-26

October 2026

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BIF
BROADBAND INDIA FORUM
"Think Tank for Digital Transformation"

डॉ. पेम्मासानी चंद्र शेखर
Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar

सत्यमेव जयते

राज्य मंत्री
संचार एवं ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
Minister of State for Communications
and Rural Development
Government of India

MESSAGE

I am delighted to send my best wishes to the **Broadband India Forum (BIF)** on the occasion of its **11th Annual General Meeting** and the release of its Annual Report for 2025–26, as the Forum completes over a decade of meaningful contribution to India's digital ecosystem.

The past year has been a landmark for India's communications sector. With 5G services now reaching all States and Union Territories, India has emerged as one of the world's fastest 5G adopters. At the same time, the launch of the National Broadband Mission 2.0 (2025–30) has sharpened our focus on extending high-speed broadband to villages, schools, health centres, and anchor institutions, in line with the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

To strengthen the public Wi-Fi ecosystem and accelerate last-mile access, DoT has undertaken a series of user-friendly reforms under the PM-WANI framework. In this context, BIF's work assumes even greater significance.

I am confident that BIF will continue to be a trusted platform for such engagement, helping shape a secure, inclusive, and innovation-led digital economy.

I congratulate the entire BIF team and its members on their 11th Annual General Meeting, and wish the Forum continued success in the years ahead.

(Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar)

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प्रो. अभय करंदीकर
Prof. Abhay Karandikar
सदस्य
Member

सत्यमेव जयते

भारत सरकार
नीति आयोग
Government of India
NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR TRANSFORMING INDIA
NITI Aayog

MESSAGE

I congratulate Broadband India Forum (BIF) as it enters its second decade of engagement with India's digital and communications ecosystem. Over the past decade, BIF has played a constructive role in advancing policy discussions by bringing together government, industry and other stakeholders on issues that are increasingly central to India's digital transformation. Through its work across broadband, digital infrastructure, satellite communications, critical communications and emerging technologies, BIF has helped bring diverse perspectives to shape the digital landscape.

India's journey towards Viksit Bharat will be significantly shaped by the ability to harness technology for economic growth, productivity, inclusion and global competitiveness. Artificial Intelligence, advanced connectivity, semiconductors, quantum technologies and other frontier technologies are rapidly transforming industries and public services, while creating new opportunities to address developmental challenges through innovation.

India has demonstrated considerable strength in adopting and deploying emerging technologies at scale. The next phase of the technological journey must build on this foundation by strengthening the capability to develop, deploy and scale technologies domestically. Our experience with Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has demonstrated the transformative potential of digital systems designed around accessibility and inclusion. As digital technologies become more deeply embedded across sectors, reliable broadband, next-generation networks and resilient digital infrastructure will remain foundational in supporting new applications across healthcare, education, agriculture, manufacturing, mobility and public service delivery.

In this evolving landscape, BIF's engagement across broadband, digital infrastructure, satellite communications, critical communications, emerging technologies and technology policy, together with its growing focus on consumer interests, can help shape an innovation-led, inclusive and future-ready technology ecosystem that will be a cornerstone of India's acceleration towards Viksit Bharat by 2047.

As BIF moves forward into its second decade, I extend my best wishes for a successful 11th Annual General Meeting and for the year ahead. I look forward to BIF continuing its constructive contribution to India's evolving digital and communications landscape.

(Abhay Karandikar)

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अनिल कुमार लाहोटी
Anil Kumar Lahoti

सत्यमेव जयते

अध्यक्ष
भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण
Chairman
TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Message

I extend my congratulations to Broadband India Forum (BIF) on yet another year of extensive work in articulating and advocating issues for its member stakeholders and the successful publication of its Annual Report for the year 2025-26.

More than a decade of focused engagement on broadband policy is a significant milestone and reflects a determined commitment to issues of connectivity to citizens for furthering the objectives of Digital India.

The year under review marks a significant achievement in India's digital journey. During 2025-26, number of India's broadband subscribers crossed 1 billion a milestone that speaks not only of scale, but also of deepening access across geographies and communities.

TRAI's mandate is to nurture an environment where access to digital services become possible for every Indian - through regulations that protect consumer choice, frameworks that encourage investment and innovation, and a relentless focus on quality, affordability and trust. In 2025-26, we refined commercial communications regulations to curb unsolicited communications, advanced the Rating of Properties framework for in-building connectivity, and examined technology-neutral authorization frameworks for terrestrial and satellite networks. These technical instruments are intended to make networks more resilient and inclusive.

The Broadband India Forum has deepened India's connectivity discourse through its Subsea Cables and Cloud Infrastructure Conference and its Critical Communications India Conference with TCCA, while continuing to contribute constructively to TRAI's consultations. This reflects its commitment to evidence-based, solution-oriented dialogue in the larger public interest as well as growth of industry.

TRAI looks forward to valuable views and inputs from BIF and all stakeholders as we work together towards a digitally empowered India. On behalf of TRAI, I wish every success to Forum and its members on completion of 11th year.

25/09/2026

(Anil Kumar Lahoti)

वर्ल्ड ट्रेड सेंटर, टावर-एफ (चौथे से सातवां तल), नौरोजी नगर, नई दिल्ली-110029
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एस. कृष्णन, आई.ए.एस.
सचिव
S. Krishnan, I.A.S.
Secretary

सत्यमेव जयते

इलेक्ट्रॉनिकी और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
Ministry of Electronics &
Information Technology (MeitY)
Government of India

16th September, 2026

Message

I am pleased to see the Broadband India Forum (BIF) carry its work into a second decade, once again bringing its members together for its Annual General Meeting. In an ecosystem where technology tends to outpace regulation, BIF has come to occupy an unusual and useful space, acting as a translation layer between what the sector is building and what policy needs to anticipate next.

This past year has been consequential for India's digital economy. The notification of the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025, and the constitution of the Data Protection Board mark the moment our data protection framework moved from intent to operation — a shift that will shape how every Indian's data is handled for years to come. Alongside this, the India AI Impact Summit 2026 positioned India as a country capable of setting terms for responsible, equitable use of AI for itself and for the Global South. Our continuing push for sovereign compute and semiconductor capability, and for a data centre landscape that draws global investment, is laying the physical foundation beneath this digital ambition.

BIF's engagement across these fronts and consistent advocacy for a risk-based, human-centric approach to AI governance is aligned with the government's approach. BIF's sustained engagement across these areas exemplifies the kind of industry-government collaboration that is essential to realising the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

As India works towards a Viksit Bharat, I look forward to MeitY's continued partnership with BIF, and to the ideas this collaboration will surface in the year ahead.

(S. Krishnan)

Digital India
Power To Empower

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चंचल कुमार, भा.प्र.से.
सचिव
CHANCHAL KUMAR, I.A.S.
Secretary

सत्यमेव जयते

भारत सरकार
सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय
Government of India
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

MESSAGE

I am pleased to see Broadband India Forum (BIF) enter its second decade of engagement with India's rapidly evolving digital ecosystem: Over the years, BIF has broadened its work beyond connectivity to engage with the growing convergence of communications, broadcasting, digital media, emerging technologies and the creative economy. This wider engagement is particularly relevant as technological developments and changing consumption patterns continue to reshape India's media and broadcasting landscape.

2. India's broadcasting sector continues to play an important role in the country's media and information sector, serving diverse audiences across languages, regions and formats. Even as digital platforms assume a growing role, television, radio and other broadcasting services continue to provide significant scale and reach for news, information, entertainment and cultural content. The increasing convergence of broadcasting and digital media is creating an interconnected ecosystem in which content, technology and distribution models are evolving together. It is therefore important that the sector remains vibrant, inclusive, accessible and responsive to changing audience expectations.

3. Artificial Intelligence is also beginning to influence several aspects of media and broadcasting, including content creation, production, localisation, accessibility and distribution. While these technologies offer opportunities to enhance efficiency, widen access and enable new forms of creativity, their growing use also calls for attention to transparency, authenticity and responsible adoption.

4. BIF's engagement on responsible technology adoption and digital media policy intersects with several of these emerging priorities. Constructive engagement among Government, industry and other stakeholders can contribute to a better understanding of technological change and the policy responses required. I look forward to continued engagement with BIF and other stakeholders and compliment BIF on completing a decade of work. I extend my best wishes to its members for a successful Annual General Meeting and for the year ahead.

5/10/26

(Chanchal Kumar)

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डॉ. पवन कुमार गोयनका
Dr. Pawan Kumar Goenka

सत्यमेव जयते
भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

अध्यक्ष, इन-स्पेस
Chairman, IN-SPACe

Message

I am pleased to extend my best wishes to Broadband India Forum on its 11th anniversary.

The Government of India unleashed space-sector reforms in 2020, and transformed the space ecosystem from a vendor-based model into a fully commercial powerhouse. IN-SPACe was setup to create a stable and predictable regulatory framework in the space sector and enable the Non-Government Entities in undertaking the space activities. Indian Space Policy 2023 outlined a clear framework by segmenting roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. This has resulted in tectonic shift in the sector dynamics with India officially having around 440 registered space technology startups as on date.

Globally these are very exciting times in the satcom space, which is undergoing a massive, multi-dimensional revolution. Satcom is the backbone of India's digital infrastructure and bridges the connectivity gap between remote/rural regions where terrestrial networks face geographical challenges. We are entering a new era – with declining satellite build and launch costs, and with the advent and proliferation of new technologies like NGSO constellations which offer very high bandwidth capability, lower latencies and unique capabilities like Direct-to-Device or Direct-to-cell capabilities. Coupled with the seamless convergence of satellite networks with terrestrial 5G architecture, the satcom segment of the space sector is truly taking off for newer orbits.

The catalysts to this new trend are radical policy shifts and aggressive private sector participation, which would enable the Indian space economy (valued at $8.4 billion in 2023) to skyrocket to targeted $44 billion over the next decade. The market is absolutely electrifying to receive upcoming HTS satellite by Ananth Technologies and indigenous LEO communication constellation announced by Reliance Jio – making satcom market as high-volume, hyper-competitive commercial market.

BIF's role is quite relevant in this space as an independent policy forum and think tank that works to advance the satellite communications (Satcom) sector in India through policy and regulatory advocacy. I understand that BIF has a dedicated Satcom focused committee which provides a platform for satellite operators, manufacturers, technology providers and startups to deliberate on aspects related to policy, regulations, technology and market access in Satcom.

BIF has been making significant contributions to the Satellite Communication policy and regulatory landscape. I am quite confident and hopeful that they shall continue to add value to the growth of the sector to help facilitate affordable and ubiquitous Satellite Communications to every nook and corner of the country.

On the 11th anniversary, I wish BIF all the best in their endeavours!.

September 29, 2026

डॉ. पवन गोयनका
(Dr. Pawan Goenka)

IN-SPACe
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय अंतरिक्ष संवर्धन एवं प्राधिकरण केंद्र मुख्यालय, बोपल, अहमदाबाद-380058
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Ex-Officio Secy. to the Govt. of India

सत्यमेव जयते

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Message

I am pleased to learn that the **Broadband India Forum (BIF)** is convening its **11th Annual General Body Meeting** and releasing its **Annual Report for 2025–26**.

Broadband is a foundational enabler of economic growth, governance, education, healthcare, and financial inclusion. The Department of Telecommunications remains committed to "Broadband for All" through affordable access, robust infrastructure, and a financially sustainable telecom ecosystem.

The sector's financial performance reflects encouraging momentum. India's telecom services gross revenue increased from Rs. 2,33,633 crore in 2018-19 to Rs. 4,08,681 crore in 2025-26, with 8.32% growth rate. The total Licence Fee and Spectrum Usage Charges in FY 2025-26 have touched Rs. 44,675 crore. These trends indicate improving sectoral health and a stronger contribution by the industry to the national resources.

Government reforms relating to AGR, bank guarantees, interest obligations, and Spectrum Usage Charges for spectrum auctioned in 2022 and thereafter are enhancing liquidity and encouraging investment, particularly for rural and remote network expansion.

Satellite communication is emerging as a vital complement to terrestrial networks. Accordingly, DoT is engaged to form a policy for assignment of satellite spectrum for enabling the start of ubiquitous availability of satellite services in India. This framework seeks to balance revenue considerations, ease of doing business, and the imperative of universal connectivity.

BharatNet, the PLI scheme, indigenous 4G deployment, and LEO/MEO satellite services would be strengthening India's digital infrastructure.

In this evolving landscape, industry associations and think tanks play an indispensable role. The Broadband India Forum, now in its 11th year, has consistently provided a platform for evidence-based dialogue on policy, regulation, and technology. Its engagement with the Ministry in WRC 2023, National Telecom Policy 2025, Delicensing of 6GHz, NFAP 2025 and Stakeholder Advisory Committee, has helped surface practical challenges and shape balanced, forward-looking solutions.

On behalf of the Department of Telecommunications, I extend best wishes to BIF for a successful AGM and continued contribution to a secure, resilient, inclusive, and financially sustainable digital India.

Manish Sinha

(Manish Sinha)

New Delhi
October 19, 2026

FROM THE **PRESIDENT'S DESK**

When Broadband India Forum began its work in 2015, India had roughly 60 million broadband users. Public Wi-Fi was confined largely to a handful of airports and railway stations. Satellite broadband for ordinary consumers was held back by legacy rules, and almost every spectrum discussion began and ended with mobile. We set ourselves a simple agenda: broadband for all.

Eleven years on, India has more than 1,094 million broadband subscriptions, an eighteen-fold increase. That is a remarkable national achievement, and the credit belongs to the Government, the regulator and an industry that invested at great scale. Yet the goal we set ourselves remains some distance away.

While mobile broadband has connected hundreds of millions, meaningful digital inclusion increasingly depends on high-capacity, reliable and affordable broadband reaching homes, schools, enterprises and public institutions. Fixed broadband still accounts for only around 48 million connections—approximately four per cent of total broadband subscriptions—and rural wireline penetration remains extremely low. As India's digital economy expands, the conversation must therefore move beyond connectivity alone to the quality, resilience and capacity of the infrastructure that supports it.

That broader vision has always guided the work of Broadband India Forum. Over the past year, we have continued to advocate policies that not only expand access, but also strengthen the foundations of India's digital economy—from spectrum and public Wi-Fi to satellite communications, subsea cables, artificial intelligence and critical communications.

THE YEAR THAT WAS

The most significant policy milestone of the year came in January 2026 with the Government's decision to delicence the lower 500 MHz of the 6 GHz band for licence-exempt Wi-Fi and other low-power applications. This landmark decision places India alongside leading digital economies in enabling next-generation Wi-Fi and significantly expands the country's wireless broadband capacity.

For BIF, the announcement marked the culmination of several years of sustained engagement with policymakers, technical experts and industry stakeholders. Our advocacy will now, more than ever, focus on the importance of synergistic co-existence of IMT and Wi-Fi in the 6 GHz band to meet India's rapidly growing demand for affordable, high-speed connectivity.

Public Wi-Fi also received renewed policy attention with TRAI's 2026 consultation on public Wi-Fi. TRAI has yet again reiterated the role of public Wi-Fi as a complementary layer of India's broadband infrastructure. BIF has consistently championed the need for PM-WANI and more emphasis on state support for building and propagating the business models for public Wi-Fi through a distributed network of entrepreneurs. The vision is simple: **'Har Shop Mein WANI'**—transforming neighbourhood shops, cafés and kirana stores into micro-entrepreneurs that extend affordable broadband, one hotspot at a time.

The rules for authorisation of telecom services under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 were the most substantial regulatory exercise of the year. BIF participated extensively in each consultation, advocating a framework that promotes competition, encourages innovation and reduces unnecessary compliance burdens. Our recommendations focused on ensuring that emerging internet-based services are regulated appropriately, that technology-neutral principles remain central to implementation, and that regulatory processes remain proportionate for businesses of all sizes. As implementation continues, we remain committed to working constructively with the Government to ensure that the new framework supports both innovation and consumer interests.

We were encouraged by the formal launch of the Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider (DCIP) under the Telecommunications (Authorisation for Telecommunication Network) Rules, 2026. The DCIP framework is expected to facilitate the proliferation of fixed-broadband and wireless connectivity infrastructure within buildings, thereby improving service quality and customer experience. Although we advocated that IXPs should not be obliged to seek authorisation, however, the final outcome of the light touch authorization framework under the Rules will enable wider deployment of IXPs. This will strengthen the resilience and robustness of India's internet infrastructure by enabling more local traffic exchange, reducing latency, and improving overall network efficiency.

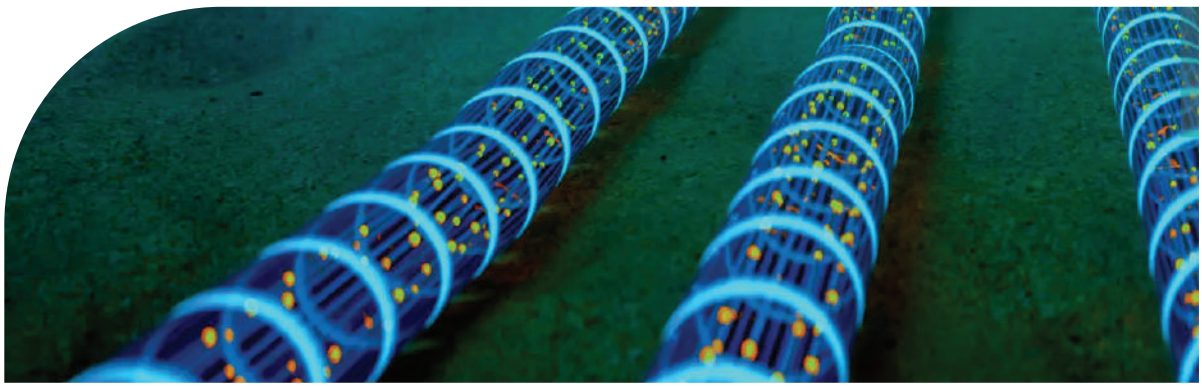
The year also saw an important moment at the meeting point of technology and law. In the proceedings before the Delhi High Court on the use of news content to train AI models, BIF placed before the Court the view that India's copyright framework should leave room for the development of artificial intelligence. In its interim order of July 2026, the Court declined to restrain the training of large language models and took note of the wider public interest in AI's growth, including for models being developed in India. The matter is still before the Court, and we will follow it with due respect for the judicial process. The proceedings will underscore the importance of developing policy frameworks that enable responsible AI innovation while safeguarding legitimate rights.

BUILDING CONSENSUS FOR EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

One of BIF's enduring strengths has been its ability to bring together Government, regulators, industry, academia and international experts to build consensus on emerging policy issues. As digital infrastructure becomes increasingly interconnected, such dialogue is more important than ever.

India Satcom, our flagship summit, marked its tenth edition in August 2026. Over the past decade, the conversation has evolved from debating the fate of satellite broadband in India to addressing issues such as direct-to-device communications, spectrum coexistence, satellite security and the integration of non-terrestrial networks into the country's broader communications ecosystem. The evolution of the conference mirrors the evolution of India's satellite sector itself.

Our work on subsea cables continued. In March 2025 we held India's first international conference on subsea cable systems. The response from Government, regulators and industry encouraged us to broaden it, and in February 2026 it became the first Convergent Conference on Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure. It brought together DoT, TRAI and leading global and Indian companies, and we were heartened by the Chairman of TRAI's kind words on how quickly the conference had evolved. As India seeks to position itself as a global digital and AI hub, these assets – subsea connectivity, cable landing stations, cloud infrastructure and data centre, are becoming strategic national infrastructure that requires coordinated policy attention.



We felt the need early for a dedicated platform on critical communications: the networks that public safety agencies, disaster response teams, utilities and transport systems depend on when everything else fails. After holding the 1st Mission Critical Communications India Conference in 2025, we held its second edition in September 2026, bringing together the agencies that run these networks, standards bodies and industry. Advancing this was an effort towards realizing our partnership with "The Critical Communications Association".

Beyond these flagship initiatives, we convened discussions on private 5G networks, evolving intermediary regulations and other emerging technology issues, reflecting the growing convergence of telecommunications, digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence. At the India AI Impact Summit, we contributed to discussions on sustainable digital infrastructure and responsible AI, highlighting the critical role of data centres, energy efficiency, cloud infrastructure and enabling policy frameworks in supporting India's AI ambitions.

Alongside our regular interactions with the Department of Telecommunications, TRAI, MeitY and the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, we also engaged with the Ministry of Power, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Education, DPIIT and various State Governments. This widening engagement reflects an important reality: digital infrastructure policy today extends well beyond the telecom sector and increasingly intersects with energy, transport, manufacturing, education and industrial policy.

THE AGENDA AHEAD

Despite the important progress achieved this year, several policy issues remain unresolved and will continue to require sustained attention.

India's roadmap for the 5.9 GHz band remains an important priority as connected and intelligent transport systems continue to evolve. Similarly, the timely notification of network authorisation rules for satellite earth station gateways will play an important role as commercial satellite broadband services expand across the country.

BIF will also continue its advocacy on the coexistence of Wi-Fi and IMT applications in the upper 6 GHz band as undertaken by OfCom in the UK, rationalisation of levies affecting fixed broadband deployment, wider adoption of PM-WANI, and balanced, technology-neutral regulatory approaches for digital platforms and artificial intelligence.

These issues may appear diverse, but they are connected by a common principle: India's digital future will depend upon regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation, remain proportionate in their requirements and create confidence for long-term investment.

The country must continue strengthening fixed broadband and public Wi-Fi so that every home, school, enterprise and community can benefit from reliable, high-capacity connectivity. Equally important is the digital backbone that most users never see—subsea cables, cable landing stations, satellite gateways, cloud infrastructure and data centres—which increasingly determine India's competitiveness in the global digital economy.

Building trusted and resilient digital infrastructure will require continued investment in cybersecurity, critical communications and responsible artificial intelligence. At the same time, regulatory frameworks must remain simple, transparent and technology-neutral so that innovation can flourish without compromising public interest.

What distinguishes Broadband India Forum is the diversity of its membership. Telecommunications operators, technology companies, satellite providers, equipment manufacturers, cloud service providers, start-ups and global digital companies come together on a common platform to develop evidence-based, technology-neutral policy recommendations. That diversity of perspectives enables us to engage constructively with policymakers while contributing to informed public debate on the future of India's digital ecosystem.

None of our work would have been possible without the confidence and active participation of our members. I extend my sincere gratitude to our Chairperson, Ms. Aruna Sundararajan, the Executive Council, Government ministries, regulators and our many institutional partners for their continued guidance and collaboration. I also thank the BIF Directorate, whose dedication and professionalism continue to strengthen the Forum's contribution to India's policy landscape.

Our first decade taught us the value of persistence. As we begin the second, we hope to be as quick to take up new questions as we have been steady in pursuing the old ones.

II. SUMMARY OF THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF BIF'S ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST AGM HELD IN OCTOBER 2025, FOR QUICK REFERENCE:

• 15 NOVEMBER 2025
BIF organized a panel discussion at the Digital Citizen Summit 2025 on "Policy Pathways for Trusted and Responsible AI through Data Governance" held at T-Hub in Hyderabad.

• 27-28 NOVEMBER 2025
BIF played a key role in organizing India Internet Governance Forum 2025 and hosted two panel discussions as part of the Forum. First, a panel discussion along with CUTS International on "Building Trust in Synthetic Media through Responsible Innovation & Governance", which was an official Pre-Summit Event in the lead up to the AI Impact Summit 2026 and secondly hosted a panel discussion along with The Dialogue on "Balancing AI Innovation and Copyright: Global Lessons for India's Digital Future".

• 12 DECEMBER 2025
BIF partnered with Primus Partners for the launch of the 2nd Report in the series: "Empowering Small Businesses through Digital Advertising" at New Delhi.

• 16 DECEMBER 2025
BIF partnered with The Quantum Hub and Digital Empowerment Foundation to organize a Roundtable, as an official Pre-Summit Event of the India AI Impact Summit, on the theme "Empowering Through AI: Unlocking Accessible Innovation Through Responsible Governance."

• 16 & 17 FEBRUARY 2026
During the AI Impact Summit 2026, BIF organised two sessions at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi- a Panel Discussion on "The Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Accord (SDIA): Driving Sustainability of AI Infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific Region" in collaboration with Asia Pacific Data Centre Association (APDCA), Singapore, and a Panel Discussion on "AI Compute beyond GPUs: Building Resilience, Innovation & Efficiency through Democratizing AI Resources" in collaboration with Koan Advisory Group.

• 24 FEBRUARY 2026
BIF organised the 1st Convergent Conference on Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure on the theme "Connecting Continents, Scaling Digital Cloud". Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI was the Chief Guest at the Conference. The event saw participation from senior government officials, regulators and industry leaders.

• 9 APRIL 2026
BIF organized a Digital Dialogue on "Understanding the Draft IT Rules", bringing together leading voices from across the digital ecosystem to deliberate on the evolving regulatory landscape and its implications for India's digital journey.

• 21 APRIL 2026
BIF organized a Roundtable Discussion on "International Spectrum Rules" in New Delhi, bringing together stakeholders from Government, industry, academia and the satellite ecosystem to deliberate on key spectrum-related issues in the lead-up to WRC-27.

16 JUNE 2026

BIF organized an invite-only Roundtable Discussion on *"From Access to Accountability: Rethinking Child Safety in the Digital Age"*. The Roundtable was graced by Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, Member Secretary, NCPCR as the Chief Guest and brought together stakeholders from industry, psychiatry and civil society to deliberate on online child safety and meaningful digital participation.

18 JUNE 2026

BIF organized its World Wi-Fi Day Conference 2026 on the theme *"Unlocking 6 GHz: Powering India's Next Wireless Leap"*, bringing together senior Government officials from DoT and industry leaders to deliberate on India's broadband connectivity, Public Wi-Fi ecosystem and future-ready 6 GHz spectrum roadmap.

INDIA SatCom 2026

10th Flagship Summit

CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS INDIA • NEW DELHI 2026

Presented by TCCA | BIF BROADBAND INDIA FORUM "Think Tank for Digital Transformation"

17 AUGUST 2026

BIF organised an invite-only CXO Roundtable on Satellite Communications in New Delhi as part of the 10th India Satcom 2026. Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACe, graced the Roundtable as the Chief Guest, while the discussion was moderated by Dr. Revathy, Joint Wireless Adviser, WPC Wing, DoT. The Roundtable brought together senior industry leaders to deliberate on viable deployment models for satellite broadband, affordability, terminal costs, indigenous manufacturing, D2D/NTN evolution and the regulatory and policy measures to support the growth of India's Satcom ecosystem.

18 AUGUST 2026

BIF organized the 10th edition of India Satcom 2026 on the theme "Satcom: Enabler for Digital Inclusivity and Transformation". Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Member, NITI Aayog, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Conference brought together senior policymakers, Government representatives, regulators and industry leaders to deliberate on the evolving role of satellite communications in strengthening India's digital infrastructure and expanding inclusive connectivity.

2–3 SEPTEMBER 2026

BIF, in association with the Critical Communications Association (TCCA), organized the 2nd edition of Critical Communications India 2026. Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI graced the Conference as the Chief Guest. The event brought together senior representatives from Government, regulators, public safety and disaster management agencies, standards organisations and the mission-critical communications industry from India and abroad to deliberate on strengthening India's Public Protection and Disaster Relief communications framework.

III. OTHER KEY EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS: BIF COHOSTED AND PARTICIPATED IN A NUMBER OF EVENTS DURING THE PERIOD (FROM OCTOBER 2025 TO SEPTEMBER 2026)

• 6 NOVEMBER 2025

BIF organized a Special Felicitation event for Mr. Ram Mohan, technology leader, on his being inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame for his contribution towards bringing the .IN domain registry to life and introducing .BHARAT in 22 Indian languages.

• 12 NOVEMBER 2025

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for the 11th Cloud & Data Centre India 2025, organized by Bharat Exhibitions at Le Meridien, New Delhi. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF delivered the Context Setting Address during the inaugural session. The event also saw participation from leading industry members, including members of BIF.

• 6 FEBRUARY 2026

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for the Bharat Private 5G Networks Summit organised in Mumbai. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF delivered the Introductory Address during the inaugural session on *"Shaping Bharat's Private 5G Future: Policy Frameworks, Spectrum Opportunities & Intelligent FWA-Driven Broadband"*. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF also participated as a panellist and shared BIF's perspectives on private 5G policy and enterprise adoption.

• 11 APRIL 2026

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for the 3rd Bharat Digital Healthcare Summit held on the theme *"Digital Healthcare 2.0: Where AI Meets Care"*. The Summit brought together healthcare leaders, policymakers, hospital CXOs, technology innovators and AI pioneers to discuss the future of AI-powered and patient-centric healthcare delivery in India.

• 22 MAY 2026

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for Bharat 6G 2026, held in New Delhi. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF delivered the Introductory Address during the Inaugural Session on *"Bharat 6G Vision: Shaping India's Leadership in the Global 6G Era"*. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF also participated as a panellist at the event.

• 24 JUNE 2026

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for the 4th Broadband India Summit 2026, held in Mumbai. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF delivered the Introductory Address during the Inaugural Session and was also the moderator for the session on *"Next-Gen Connectivity: AI-Driven Networks, 5G Infrastructure and the Future of Digital Bharat"*. In addition, Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF participated as a panellist on the *"Role of Satcom in Bridging the Digital Divide"*.

• 21 AUGUST 2026

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for the 4th Safe City & Intelligent Mobility India Summit 2026 held in New Delhi. Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, BIF participated in the inaugural session themed *"AI-Driven Safety and Intelligent Mobility for Next-Gen Cities"* and moderated the panel discussion on *"Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X): Powering the Next Generation of Connected, Intelligent & Safe Mobility."*

• 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

BIF was the Knowledge Partner for the launch of the policy white paper titled *"Incidental Accessibility: How Mainstream Consumer Technology Is Expanding Accessibility in India"*, organised by The Quantum Hub (TQH) in New Delhi. The event brought together representatives from Government, persons with disabilities, technology companies, disability-rights organisations, academia and the research community.

IV. BIF WAS ALSO INVITED TO IMPORTANT MEETINGS ORGANISED BY TRAI, DOT, MOHUA, MEITY, DOS, MOF AND MIB:

DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- **Participated in the Stakeholder Advisory Committee for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) & Infrastructure Providers (IPs).**
- **Participated in consultations on implementation of the Telecommunications (Right of Way) Rules, 2024.**
- **Contributed to discussions on Ease of Doing Business reforms under the Telecommunications Act.**
- **Participated in Bharat 6G Mission Apex Council meetings & Review of Bharat 6G Alliance Meetings.**
- **Contributed to discussions on the SASCI Scheme – an Incentive Scheme for the States for implementation of DoT guidelines on Right of Way.**
- **Participated in meetings on Single Tower – Multiple Utilities (STMU) to discuss the effective utilisation of telecom towers for supporting multiple use cases, including Wi-Fi.**
- **Participated in the meetings of the Working Group for preparation of the Technical Report on "Interworking and Integration of Terrestrial Network with Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN)".**
- **Led a delegation of BIF's FTTX & IBS Committee to meet with Advisor (QoS), TRAI and Joint Secretary (T), DoT on Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Providers (DCIPs) and in-building solutions.**
- **Participated in ITU-R, ITU-T and ITU-D National Working Groups.**
- **Participated in NCCS stakeholder consultation on the proposed Graded Security Certification Scheme for OEMs.**
- **Participated in TEC Working Groups on matters relating to development and review of standards and Generic Requirements, including:**
  - Wi-Fi Offloading technology
  - 5G Core
  - NTN Integration
  - WLAN Interworking Gateways/Network Functions in 4G/5G Systems,
  - AP-STA for Licensed mmWave band
  - eNodeB/5G NSA
  - Metaverse & its use cases
  - Convergence & Broadcasting
  - Conformity Assessment & Certification of Telecom Equipment
  - IR for terrestrial transmission of broadcasting channels to DPOs

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA (TRAI)

- **Participated in Open House Discussions on:**
  - Auction of Radio Frequency Spectrum in the Frequency Bands Identified for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT)
  - Regulatory Framework for Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Communication
  - Proliferation of Public Wi-Fi Networks in India
- **Continued engagement on QoS and Digital Connectivity Infrastructure.**

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (MEITY)

Digital Policy & AI

- **Organised stakeholder delegation meeting with the Secretary MeitY on the Draft IT Amendment Rules relating to Synthetically Generated Information.**
- **Participated in multiple closed-door consultations chaired by the Secretary, MeitY on:**
  - Proposed acceleration of the DPDP Framework
  - IT Amendment Rules
  - Synthetic Media
  - Bot accounts and online misinformation

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING

- **Participated in stakeholder consultation on Guidelines for Accessibility of Content on Platforms of Publishers of Online Curated Content (OTT Platforms) for Persons with Hearing and Visual Impairment under the chairmanship by Shri C. Senthil Rajan, Jt. Secy, MIB.**

MINISTRY OF POWER

- **Participated in discussions on the National Electricity Policy and issues affecting telecom towers and data centres.**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

- **Made Representations to the Department of School Education & Literacy and CIET-NCERT on:**
  - Digital Education Curriculum
  - ICT Infrastructure in Schools
  - Recommendations on mandatory digital education

NITI AAYOG

- **Participated in Jan Vishwas consultations on:**
  - Deregulation of Telecommunications Sector
  - Deregulation of the IT Laws

V. BIF'S SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM WAS INVITED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND VARIOUS INDUSTRY FORUMS TO PARTICIPATE AS SPEAKERS:

1. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG spoke at a Panel Discussion on "SatCom – Policy & Ecosystem Enablement" at the India Mobile Congress on 8 October 2025.

2. Mr. Atul Jain, Director – Technology & Standards, BIF made a presentation on "Positioning India as a Global Data Center Powerhouse: Strategic Policy Initiatives" at the 8th Annual Data Centres in India Conference organised by India Infrastructure Publishing Pvt. Ltd. in New Delhi on 15 October 2025.

3. Senior representatives from the BIF Directorate participated in a Roundtable organised by Koan Advisory on "From Shore to Core: Building Secure and Resilient Subsea Networks" on 16 October 2025.

4. Representatives from the BIF Directorate participated in the Roundtable hosted by The Dialogue on "Draft IT Amendment Rules 2025: Navigating Practical Pathways for Synthetic-Content Labelling in India" on 30 October 2025.

5. Ms. Ashika V and Ms. Shubhika H. Goel from the BIF Directorate participated in MediaNama' s event on "Draft IT Amendment Rules: Regulating for Deepfakes in India" on 5 November 2025.

6. Mr. Atul Jain attended the ITU-TRAI Workshop on Performance, Quality of Service & Quality of Experience held in Bhubaneswar on 4 December 2025.

7. Mr. Arun Mukarji and Ms. Shubhika H Goel participated in the USI-Koan Roundtable on "Trust and Resilience: Aligning Cybersecurity with AI Systems for India", held in New Delhi on 9 December 2025.

8. Ms. Ashika V, Director attended the launch of the Women in Digital Economy Network (WiDEN) hosted by The Quantum Hub on 11 December 2025.

9. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl DG spoke at a Panel Discussion on "Industry expectations from ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26)" as part of the two-day workshop organised for the Orientation of LSA Officers for ITU PP-26 on 17 December 2025.

10. Representatives from BIF attended the webinar on the Amended BharatNet Programme – "GPs and Villages Level Architecture – Improvements Planned and Challenges", organised by the National Communications Academy-T, DoT, on 31 December 2025.

11. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in a panel discussion on "AI & Copyright" organised by The Quantum Hub and Khaitan & Co.

12. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF participated in the USISPF Leadership Dialogue on "AI in Defence: Applications, Infrastructure, & Trust".

13. Mr. Arun Mukarji attended the International E-waste Exchange Study Tour organised by the ITU Area Office & Innovation Centre in Delhi, in partnership with the Department of Telecommunications, under the project "International Exchange Initiative on Regulating E-waste and Engaging Tech Companies – Creating a Circular Economy for Electronics".

14. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF participated as an eminent panelist in the Opening Panel at the 33rd Convergence India Expo 2026 on 23 March 2026. He spoke at the session themed "6G, AI & Quantum: Shaping the Intelligent Future of Connectivity", highlighting the growing significance of next-generation technologies in shaping a robust and intelligent digital ecosystem.

15. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF was invited to the TRAI Foundation Day Celebrations on 25 February 2026, where he addressed senior Government officials and industry leaders on "Network Slicing and Net Neutrality" and thereafter participated in a panel discussion on the same subject along with representatives from Jio and Ericsson

16. Mr. Atul Jain from the BIF Directorate spoke at Municipalika 2026, the 18th edition of India's international exhibition and conference on Safe, Smart and Sustainable City Solutions, on the theme of "Digital Governance".

17. Mr. Arun Mukarji from the BIF Directorate attended the 5th Merchants Day Conference, organised by the Merchant Payments Alliance of India, on 24 March 2026.

18. Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, BIF was invited as the Guest of Honour at the Mobile Ecosystem Forum's Leadership Forum India 2026, where he delivered the opening keynote on the theme "India at Scale: The Blueprint for Global Mobile Innovation".

19. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in a Roundtable Discussion on "Women and Children's Online Safety" organised by The Quantum Hub in association with YouTube.

20. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF participated as a speaker in the webinar organised by the IEEE Standards Association on "Ubiquitous Connectivity – Fundamental Pillar of Rural Communication" on 9 April 2026.

21. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V attended the Open House Discussion on "IT Rules and Future of Online Speech in India", organised by MediaNama on 23 April 2026.

22. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF participated as a speaker at "The Open Forum" organised by YouTube on 30 April 2026.

23. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in a Roundtable Discussion on Age Verification and Restricting Social Media for Children, organised by MediaNama on 15 May 2026.

24. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF and Mr. Atul Jain attended the Roundtable on "Advancing Commercial Leadership in Secure and Trusted Subsea Cables Network", organised by Koan Advisory Group in partnership with the USIBC on 29 May 2026.

25. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF and Mr. Atul Jain participated in the IN-SPACe event held in Ahmedabad on 10–11 June 2026 and spoke during the Industry Break-Out Session on the role of Satcom in boosting the economic growth of the country.

26. Mr. Atul Jain made a presentation titled "Optical Fiber as the Foundational Driver/Enabler for India's $1 Trillion Digital Economy" at the 16th Annual Conference on OFC Networks in India on 25 June 2026.

27. Mr. Arun Mukarji participated in the online Global Workshop on "Accelerating Circular Economy in India's Telecom Sector" organised by NCA-T, DoT, in association with the EU-India Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Initiative (EU-I RECEI), on 25 June 2026.

28. Mr. Atul Jain attended the announcement event of the I-2SEA submarine cable system, organised by Lightstorm in Hyderabad on 30 June 2026.

29. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in the Roundtable Discussion on DPDA Operationalization, organised by DSCI on 30 June 2026.

30. Mr. Arun Mukarji participated in the hybrid workshop on "ISP Regulation / PM-WANI vs. Centralized Architecture" organised by NCA-T on 2 July 2026.

31. Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, BIF participated as a speaker at TTDD 2026 on 10 July 2026, sharing a partner perspective on the Conference theme "Shaping the Next Decade of Telecommunications: 6G Standards, Systems and Cross-Sector Synergies."

32. Mr. Arun Mukarji made a presentation on PM-WANI for Public Wi-Fi at the APAC Forum Webinar organised by the Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA) on 20 July 2026.

33. Mr. Atul Jain participated as a speaker at the session on "Data Centre Interconnect: Backbone for AI and Cloud Scale" held on 21 July 2026.

34. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in the MediaNama Roundtable Discussion on "Age Verification and Restricting Social Media for Children" on 31 July 2026.

35. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel participated in the Pacta Consultation on the RPwD Amendment Rules on 10 August 2026.

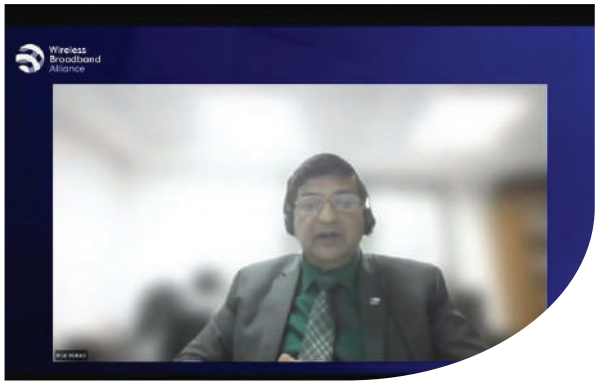
36. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in The Dialogue's Roundtable Discussion and Paper Launch on "Building a Competitive AI Ecosystem in India" on 19 August 2026.

37. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in "Closing the Loop", organised by Snap in association with YLAC, on 15 September 2026.

38. Mr. Atul Jain participated as speaker in the closed-door Roundtable on "Building India's Data Centre Ecosystem", organised by The Dialogue at the India International Centre, New Delhi, on 16 September 2026.

39. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel and Ms. Ashika V participated in Roundtable Discussion on "Functional Taxonomy of AI Value Chain Actors" on 18 September 2026.

40. Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, BIF participated as a panelist at the Report Launch on Incidental Accessibility & Inclusive Technology Showcase held on 23 September 2026.



VI. RESEARCH REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

- A Report on "Empowering Small Businesses through Digital Advertising" was released in collaboration with Primus Partners and the Institute for Competitiveness.
- A White Paper on "FSOC & LiFi: Alternative Technologies for Rural Connectivity" was published by BIF's Rural Digital Initiative Committee.
- A White Paper entitled "PM WANI: The Foundation for India's Digital Public Infrastructure" was released at the World Wi-Fi Day Conference 2026.
- A White Paper entitled "D2D – The Direct Line for Orbit to Device Integration" was released at India Satcom 2026.
- A White Paper entitled "Trusted from Space to Ground: Cybersecurity for India's Satcom Networks" was released at India Satcom 2026.

VII. MEMBERS, ADVISORS, AND DIRECTORATE:

- New members who joined the BIF family:
  a. Corporates: NEC
  b. Startups: Airspan

- Mr. Ashwani Rana, Co-Founder, BIF, assumed the role of Co-Founder & Executive Vice President of BIF wef 01 Oct 2026.

VIII. COMMITTEE UPDATES:

- A new Committee called "Trust and Safety Committee" has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Ms. Shweta Singh, Airtel and Co-Chair: Ms. Natasha Jog, Meta.

- Ms Pragya Misra of Open AI accepted the position of Co- Chair of the ICAG Committee.

- Mr. Sumit Garg, Founder and CEO, Immunity Networks accepted the post of Co-Chair for the Wi-Fi Committee.

IX. NEW PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS

- BIF continued its collaboration with Primus Partners for the 2nd year of the Report and Study on Digital Advertising and Small Businesses.

- BIF collaborated with the Asia Pacific Data Centre Association (APDCA) on initiatives relating to sustainable digital infrastructure, including the Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Accord (SDIA) for the Asia-Pacific region.

X. ARTICLES AND INTERACTIONS FOR ADVOCACY AND CREATING AWARENESS:

A wide range of authored articles and interaction-based news features were published in leading mainstream and trade media outlets during the period under review. These pieces addressed key issues and critical aspects of India's broadband and digital ecosystem. The objective of these articles has been to promote the vision of ubiquitous, affordable, and accessible broadband services across the country in a technology-neutral, service-neutral, and inclusive manner. These efforts further strengthened BIF's positioning and credibility as a leading think tank with a knowledgeable, unbiased, and forward-looking approach toward technology and its benefits for citizens. Please refer to the Articles & Interviews section for details.

XI. PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Glimpses of the nature of media coverage received throughout the FY is provided in the BIF in Media section.

XII. SOCIAL MEDIA:

BIF effectively leveraged its digital and social media platforms to enhance engagement with members and stakeholders. The Forum's online presence grew steadily, with increasing traction and followership. Regular updates on BIF's initiatives and events were shared through these channels, strengthening its outreach and visibility.

XIII. NEWSLETTER:

During the year, BIF launched "BIF TMT Pulse", a fortnightly news brief designed to provide Members and stakeholders with a concise overview of important developments across the telecom, media and technology ecosystem. The newsletter brings together key policy, regulatory and industry developments, along with relevant updates across areas such as telecom and spectrum, broadcasting, digital infrastructure, emerging technologies, AI, cybersecurity and digital governance. It has been conceived as a regular knowledge-sharing initiative to help Members stay abreast of developments of relevance to BIF's work and the wider TMT sector.

XIV. ACCOUNTS:

Necessary extracts of the Society's Audited Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year 2025–2026 have been circulated to all Members prior to the Annual General Meeting.

I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation to the Chairperson for her leadership, and to all Members, Advisors, and Associates of BIF for their continued support and active engagement.

I also extend my gratitude to the Executive Council and Office Bearers for their guidance, commitment and valuable contributions to the Forum's initiatives and achievements during the year.

Special acknowledgment is due to the BIF Directorate, a small yet highly dedicated and dynamic team, for their professionalism and tireless efforts in advancing the objectives of the Forum.

I convey my best wishes to the Forum and its Members for continued success and reaffirm my commitment to extending full support and participation in all future activities of the Society.

T.V. Ramachandran,
President

Policy Advocacy Initiatives

Policy Advocacy Initiatives

FY 2025-26

01 Telecom Rules, Regulatory Framework & Standards

AUTHORISATION REGIME UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT, 2023:

- **Provided detailed comments on the following Draft Rules made available for public consultation:**

- Draft Telecommunications (Authorisation for Provision of Main Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2025
- Draft Telecommunications (Authorisation for Provision of Miscellaneous Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2025
- Draft Telecommunications (Authorisation for Captive Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2025
- Draft Telecommunications (Regulation of Restructuring or Acquisition of Authorised Entities) Rules, 2025
- Draft Telecommunications (Migration) Rules, 2025
- Draft Telecommunications (Authorisation for Telecommunication Network) Rules, 2025
- Draft Telecommunications (Sharing, Trading and Leasing of Spectrum) Rules, 2025

NETWORK & SERVICE AUTHORISATION — RELATED SUBMISSIONS:

- Submitted suggestions to DoT on TRAI's "Recommendations on the Terms and Conditions of Network Authorisations to be Granted under the Telecommunications Act, 2023."
- Wrote to DoT to push for adoption of TRAI Recommendations on DCIP Authorization under the Telecommunications Act, 2023.
- Highlighted concerns regarding wireless deployment by property managers to DoT on the TRAI Recommendations on Network Authorization.
- Wrote to DoT and IN-SPACe requesting exemption of Cloud Hosted Telecom Network (CTN) providers from licensing/authorisation obligations proposed under Section 50 of the Draft Network Service Authorisation Rules.

CYBER SECURITY & USER IDENTIFICATION:

- Provided comments and strongly advocated against certain sections of the Draft Telecommunications (Telecom Cyber Security) Amendment Rules, 2025.
- Made detailed submissions to DoT and TRAI on the SIM Binding Directive issued to Telecom Identifier User Entities (TIUEs), raising technical, practical, and legal concerns.
- Raised concerns on Public Interest, Security and Privacy grounds regarding certain provisions of the Draft Telecommunications (User Identification) Rules, 2025.

EQUIPMENT STANDARDS & CERTIFICATION:

- Wrote to MeitY requesting that in-country testing and certification of ITSAR security requirements not be mandated for consumer electronic products, viz. mobile phones and hybrid Set Top Boxes.
- Submitted comments on PPP-MII Orders as applicable to terrestrial broadband equipment (wireless and wireline) and to nascent-sector satellite broadband equipment and user devices (UEs).
- Submitted comments to TEC on the Draft GR on "Wi-Fi over mmWave (n257, n258) Technology (WoMT) Access Point (WoMT-AP) and Station (WoMT-STA)."
- Submitted a response to the Amendment to TEC Standard 13016:2023 for Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) for Wireless Communication Devices used in close proximity to the human body.
- Wrote to Hon'ble MoC flagging concern regarding possible EMF radiation impact on human health from a proposal for higher EIRP in the draft GR on AP-STA for the licensed mmWave band, raised at the TEC Manufacturer's Forum Meeting (26 September 2025).

02 Satellite Communications (Satcom)

- Engaged with DoT on several issues related to the TRAI's Recommendation on the method of assignment and pricing of satellite spectrum for certain satellite-based commercial communication services.
- Requested DoT for expeditious in-principle clearance and other approvals required for the launch of satellite networks and for expediting the finalisation of Satellite Earth Station Gateway Guidelines several times over the year.
- Submitted comments on the Draft Guidelines for grant of NOC to a Unified Licensee holding GMPCS or Commercial VSAT CUG service authorisation, for use of its earth station gateway established in India by a telecom service provider authorised for services outside India.
- Made several requests to Hon'ble MoC highlighting the mandatory requirement for a separate authorisation for Satellite-based Telecommunication Services, and requested review of the Draft Telecommunication Rules for Main Services Authorisation.
- Wrote to IN-SPACe highlighting the need to promote ease of doing business and enhance affordability in the Satcom sector.
- Submitted strong Comments and Counter Comments as well as Post-OHD Comments to the TRAI CP on "Framework for Satellite Communication Network (SCN) Authorisation & Assignment of Spectrum to SCN Providers".

03 Spectrum Policy

VEHICLE-TO-VEHICLE (V2V/CV2X) SPECTRUM IN 5.9 GHZ BAND:

- Made several submissions to the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and to Ministry of Communications highlighting the urgent need to delicense 30 MHz in the 5.9 GHz band for V2V (CV2X) applications. This band has subsequently been delicensed.

6 GHZ BAND DELICENSING:

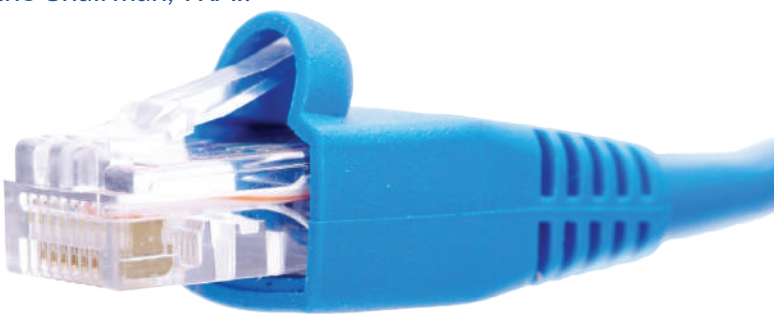
- Wrote to the Wireless Advisor requesting an extension of timelines for enabling ETA (Equipment Type Approval) for products supporting lower 6 GHz frequencies in legacy/existing models after the delicensing of 6GHz spectrum in Jan 2026.
- Made submissions to Hon'ble MoC on India's position on the Upper 6 GHz band ahead of the 2nd APT Conference Preparatory Group for WRC-27, advocating for a policy framework similar to Ofcom's that enables harmonious coexistence between Wi-Fi and IMT in the Upper 6 GHz band.

OTHER SPECTRUM MATTERS:

- Participated in the TRAI Consultation on "Assignment of Microwave Spectrum in the 6 GHz (lower), 7 GHz, 13 GHz, 15 GHz, 18 GHz, and 21 GHz bands, E-Band, and V-Band." Subsequently have written to DoT to expedite the approval of the TRAI Recommendations.
- Participated in the TRAI Consultation on "Auction of Radio Frequency Spectrum in the Frequency Bands Identified for IMT". Subsequently have written to DoT to expedite the approval of the TRAI recommendations permitting separate spectrum assignment for smaller ISPs, M2MSPs & CNPNs.

04 Interconnection, Tariff & Quality of Service

- Submitted comments on TRAI's Pre-Consultation Paper on Review of Existing Interconnection Regulations/Interconnection Matters.
- Submitted comments on TRAI's Pre-Consultation Paper on Review of Tariff for Domestic Leased Circuits (DLCs).
- Submitted comments on TRAI Consultation Paper on "Review of Existing TRAI Regulations on Interconnection Matters".
- Made a submission to TRAI on the need for multi-sourced, near-real-time measurement of QoS in India, and made a presentation on the same before the Chairman, TRAI.



05 Digital Infrastructure

FIXED-LINE BROADBAND:

- Wrote to Hon'ble MoC, and senior officials at DoT requesting a waiver of license fee on fixed-line broadband services.
- Made a request for expansion of the PMGDISHA scheme to help create demand for fixed-line broadband in rural areas.
- Made a request in the SAC for Digital Education to be mandated in a phased manner at all levels in School Education system for utilisation of BharatNet, starting from Sr. Secondary level. This point was accepted and several meetings have been conducted thereafter with MoE & NCERT, under the leadership of DoT. BIF was part of all these meetings.

TELECOM INFRASTRUCTURE – FISCAL:

- Requested DoT's intervention on the continued levy of property tax on telecom towers, in violation of the Telecommunications Act, 2023 and the Rules framed there upon.

SUBSEA CABLES:

- Socialised and advocated for key takeaways from the 1st International Subsea Cable Systems Conference (organised by BIF on 25 March 2025) among relevant government stakeholders and ministries.
- Submitted a request for rationalisation of the GST rate on submarine cable repair and maintenance services within Indian Territorial Waters (ITW) and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

DATA CENTRES:

- Submitted inputs for the formulation of the Draft Data Centre Policy to MeitY.
- BIF was included in the Working Group set up by MeitY to examine Data Centre issues, chaired by Secretary, MeitY.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY RATING & BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Submitted comments on TRAI's Draft Manual for Assessment of Digital Connectivity under the Rating of Properties for Digital Connectivity Regulations, 2024.
- Submitted comments on the TRAI Consultation Paper on "Review of Rating of Properties for Digital Connectivity Regulations, 2024".

06 PM-WANI & Public Wi-Fi

- Submitted a policy article to DoT on strengthening the PM-WANI framework through a national PDOA (PM-WANI Data Office Aggregator) layer.
- Submitted a paper on the Role of Ubiquitous PM-WANI-based Public Wi-Fi for the Success of 6G both to Hon'ble MoC and, separately, to Senior DoT officials.
- Sent a request to DoT for DBN support for Public Wi-Fi and PM-WANI deployment in rural India.

07 Internet Applications, Platform Regulation & Content Governance

- Raised concerns on the Draft Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2025 [a.k.a. Synthetically Generated Information Rules] and led a delegation of members on the same to put across the Industry viewpoint to the Secretary, MeitY.
- Provided detailed comments on the Draft Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2025.
- Submitted comments on the Draft Amendment to the Policy Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies in India.
- Submitted comments on MIB's call for inputs on addressing copyright infringement and strengthening anti-piracy strategies.
- Made a request to the Hon'ble Minister of Electronics, IT & Biotechnology, Government of Karnataka, for public consultation on the proposed Bill on Hate Speech and Misinformation.

- Shared BIF's views on consumer choice and sustainability in the broadcasting sector, along with its work on broadband via Cable TV Networks and on digital inclusion & accessibility, for the consideration of the Additional Secretary, MIB.
- Participated in the MIB meeting to discuss stakeholder representations on the Draft Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Rules, 2024 (Draft OTT Rules under COTPA).

08 AI & Emerging Technologies

- Filed an intervention in the ongoing ANI v. OpenAI matter concerning copyright infringement arising from AI training, to present the state of the nascent AI industry before the Court.
- Submitted comments on the DPIIT Working Paper on Gen AI & Copyright (Part I), to both DPIIT and MeitY.
- Submitted comments to Prasar Bharati in reference to stakeholder consultations on D2M Technology.
- Impleaded and saw through the Misleading Advertisements case to its conclusion before the Hon'ble Supreme Court.
- Socialized the Working White Paper on Responsible AI, released on 14 May 2025.

09 Digital Inclusion & Accessibility

- Made preliminary and additional submissions on the Draft Rules on Accessibility Standards for the ICT Sector, released by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD).
- Made comments and suggestions on MIB's Guidelines for accessibility of OTT platform content for persons with hearing and visual impairment.

10 Data Protection & Privacy

- Continued advocacy work on the DPDPA Rules finalisation.
- Made submissions to MeitY against the proposed acceleration of enforcement timelines under the DPDP framework.
- Made submissions outlining concerns on the proposal for "always on" Location-Based Services in mobile devices.

11 Other Policy Engagements

- Made separate submissions on Jan Vishwas Siddhant re: Ease of Doing Business in the Telecom Sector.
- Submitted comments to the Ministry of Power on the National Electricity Policy, 2026.
- Provided inputs during the U.S.–India Interim ICT Working Group Meeting (23 April 2025, New Delhi).
- Made a proposal for DoT's consideration as part of the ITU-D Study Group-1 questions: Q1/1 (enabling policies for universal connectivity in underserved, remote and rural areas) and Q5/1 (consumer protection, empowerment and accessibility, especially for persons with disabilities). The submission may be considered for the next study cycle.

Timeline of Events

(Apr 2025- Mar 2026)

Timeline of **Events**

APRIL

09 APR 2025 | Ms. Mira Swaminathan, Director – Policy Advocacy & Communications at the **World Summit Award Congress - Hyderabad.**

Presentation on BIF's work on Digital Inclusivity and Accessibility

18 APR 2025 | Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, attended a close door interaction with Prabhakar Raghavan, Chief Technologist of Google and Sh. S. Krishnan, Secretary MEITY hosted by USISPF.

23 APR 2025 | Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Sr. DDG, participated in USIBC hosted **U.S. - India ICT Interim Working Group Meeting.**

14 MAY 2025 | **3rd International Bharat 6G Conference**

Chief Guest - Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications

MAY

14 MAY 2025
EVENING

Annual Celebration of **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2025**

Chief Guest - Shri Atul K. Chaudhary, Secretary, TRAI, *along with* ***Dr. Pranita Upadhyaya, Head ITU Area Office & Innovation Centre,*** *released* ***"Working Paper on Responsible AI"***

22 MAY 2025

Mr. Atul Jain, Director – Technology & Standards spoke at the **OFC Networks in India Conference** organized by Tele.Net & India Infrastructure.

27 MAY 2025

Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General delivered a talk on **"Fibre Based Fixed Broadband for Digital Inclusivity"** at India ISP Conclave.

30 MAY 2025

Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, spoke on the **"Digital Infrastructure for Bharat: Bridging the Digital Divide"** at the Inaugural Session of the Telecom Leadership Forum Awards 2025 organised by **Voice & Data.**

JUNE

24 JUNE 2025 | **Annual Celebration of World Wi-Fi Day 2025**

Theme : "Transforming India, Innovating for the World"
Chief Guest - Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Hon'ble Minister of Communications

06 JUNE 2025 | Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Sr. DDG, spoke at a Roundtable on **"Interconnection in India"** at ISOC's Global Peering Roadshow – India Edition.

17 JUNE 2025

Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Sr. DDG spoke at the **Critical Communications World Summit** at Brussels, Belgium.

10 JULY 2025

Attended **Bharat 6G Alliance Review Meeting** Chaired by the Hon'ble MoC in Bangalore.

10 JULY 2025

Ms. Mira Swaminathan, Director – Policy Advocacy & Communications conducted a session during **Inclusive ICT workshop for girls with disabilities** in Kathmandu, Nepal, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA).

JULY

16 JULY 2025 | Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, spoke at **Wavelength – Submarine Cable Forum**, conducted by Aptelecom.

17 JULY 2025 | **3rd Broadband India Summit 2025**

Dignitaries at the inaugural were Shri Vivek Banzal, Director (CFA), BSNL; Shri Sanjay Agrawal, Director, DCPW.

08 AUG 2025 | Ms. Shubhika H. Goel, Dy. Director – Policy Advocacy & Communications, was a panellist at the DEF technical session on **"Governing Digital Disability Inclusion"** at the **Gender and Inclusion Conference 2025** in Hyderabad.

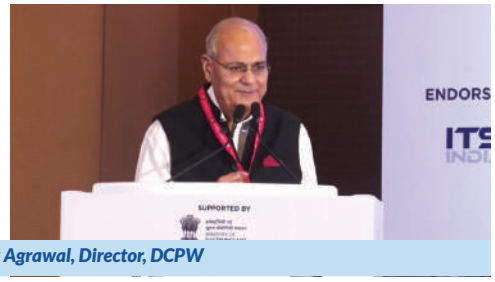
22 AUG 2025 | **1st International Critical Communications Conference**

Chief Guest - Shri A.K. Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI

Other Leading Dignitaries: Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd.), Member NDMA Board; Dr. R.K. Upadhyaya, CEO C-DoT, Shri Sanjay Agrawal, Director, DCPW; Shri Manish Aggarwal, Special Commissioner, Delhi Police.

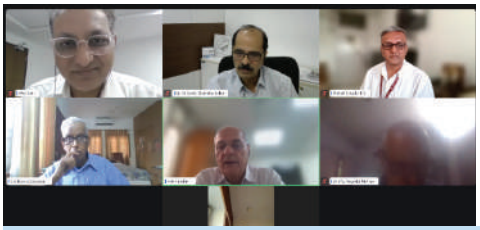
27 AUG 2025 | Mr. T.V. Ramachandran, President, spoke at a panel on **"Connecting the unconnected"** at International Institute of Communications India Forum in New Delhi.

28 AUG 2025 | **3rd Safe City and Intelligent Mobility India 2025 Conference & Exhibition**



Chief Guest - Shri Sanjay Agrawal, Director, DCPW

09 SEPT 2025 | **Digital Dialogue on "Cyber Security Challenges in Telecom Sector"**



BIF's Rural Digital Initiative Committee's Paper on "Broadband Internet Security" was also released at this occasion by Shri Mehul R Joshi, DDG (SA), DoT.

23 SEPT 2025 | **Bharat Digital Infra Summit 2025**

Chief Guest - Shri Manish Sinha, Member (Finance), DoT and
Guest of Honour - Shri A. Robert J. Ravi, Chairman & MD, BSNL
A White Paper authored by BIF's advisor, Shri Sundeep Kathuria titled:
"Digital Infrastructure for Viksit Bharat @ 2047 - A Roadmap for Inclusive Growth" was released during the event.

SEPT

OCT

26 SEPT 2025

Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, made a presentation on Critical Communication during the technical session on **"Technology for Risk Reduction – for a Safer Nation"** at the NDMA 21st Foundation Day celebration.

08 OCT 2025

Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Sr. DDG, spoke at a Panel discussion on **SatCom-Policy & Ecosystem Enablement** at the Indian Mobile Congress.

15 OCT 2025

Mr. Atul Jain, Director – Technology & Standards, made a presentation on **"Positioning India as a Global Data Center Powerhouse: Strategic Policy Initiatives"** at the 8th Annual Data Centres in India Conference organized by India Infrastructure Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

06 NOV 2025

Special Felicitation on 6th November 2025 for **Mr. Ram Mohan, Tech Leader** who was inducted in the **Internet Hall of Fame** for his efforts to bring the **.IN domain** registry to life and introduced **.BHARAT** in 22 Indian Languages.

12 NOV 2025 | **11th Cloud & Data Centre India 2025**

15 NOV 2025 | Organized a panel discussion at the **Digital Citizen Summit** on **"Policy Pathways for Trusted and Responsible AI through Data Governance"** held at T-Hub in Hyderabad.

The Panel was moderated by Ms. Sonia Jorge, Founder & Executive Director at Global Digital Inclusion Partnership, Ms. Usha Raman, Professor from the University of Hyderabad; Mr. Prabhakar Rao, Former Professor at University of Hyderabad, and Mr. Shatakratu Sahu, Associate Director, US India Strategic Partnership Forum. Ms. Shubhika H. Goel, from BIF was part of the panel.

27-28 NOV 2025 | **India Internet Governance Forum 2025**

THEME : "Advancing Internet Governance for an Inclusive & Sustainable Viksit Bharat"

*A panel discussion along with CUTS International : **"Building Trust in Synthetic Media through Responsible Innovation & Governance"***

*A panel discussion along with The Dialogue : **"Balancing AI Innovation and Copyright: Global Lessons for India's Digital Future"***

DEC

16 DEC 2025

Organized a Pre-Summit Roundtable as part of the India AI Impact Summit **"Empowering Through AI: Unlocking Accessible Innovation Through Responsible Governance."**

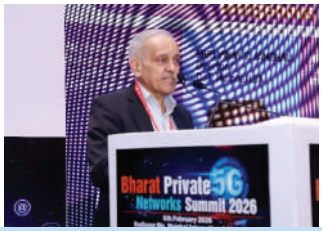
Speakers joined from Youth4Jobs, Nobaflix, Meta, Design Beku, Association of People with Disabilities, AssisTech Foundation, Tata Communication Services, LTI Mindtree alongside Soochnapreneurs from Digital Empowerment Foundation.

17 DEC 2025

Mr. Debashish Bhattacharya, Addl. DG, spoke at a Panel Discussion on **"Industry expectations from ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26)"** as part of the 2-Day Workshop organized for Orientation of LSA officers for ITU PP-26.

06 FEB 2026

Bharat Private 5G Networks Summit



Theme: "Shaping Bharat's Private 5G Future: Policy Frameworks, Spectrum Opportunities & Intelligent FWA-Driven Broadband"

FEB

16-17 FEB 2026

AI Impact Summit 2026

(a) *Panel Discussion on **"The Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Accord (SDIA): Driving Sustainability of AI Infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific Region"** in collaboration with Asia Pacific Data Centre Association (APDCA)*

(b) *Panel Discussion on **"AI Compute beyond GPUs: Building Resilience, Innovation & Efficiency through Democratizing AI Resources"** in collaboration with Koan Advisory Group*

24 FEB 2026 | **1st Convergent Conference on Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure**

25 FEB 2026

At **TRAI's Foundation Day Celebrations**, Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General gave an address on the issue of **"Network Slicing and Net Neutrality."**

26 FEB 2026

Mr. Atul Jain, Director – Technology & Standards spoke at the 18th **Municipalika Conference 2026,** on the theme of **"Digital Governance".**

23 MAR 2026 | Brig. Anil Tandan, DG, spoke at the **33rd Convergence India Expo 2026** on a panel on **"6G, AI & Quantum: Shaping the Intelligent Future of Connectivity".**

MAR

24 MAR 2026

Brig. Anil Tandan, Director General, was invited as the Guest of Honour at the **Mobile Ecosystem Forum's Leadership Forum India 2026**. He delivered the opening keynote on the theme: **"India at Scale: The Blueprint for Global Mobile Innovation".**

BIF IN MEDIA

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India's Digital Future:
Policy, Connectivity
and Inclusive Growth

MEDIANAMA

Broadband India Forum Urges Indian Government To Expedite Launch Of Satcom Services

tele.net

INDUSTRY SPEAK

Private 5G: India doesn't need another study to prove demand, it needs action

by tele.net
26 Aug 2025 13:13 IST • Updated 26 Aug 2025 16:28 IST

TV Ramachandran, President, Broadband India Forum

While India is forging ahead on many digital fronts, it seems to be disappointingly sliding back in a vital area of 5G use case deployment - that of the use of direct spectrum private 5G which is quite essential to accelerate the digitalisation in several critical sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, logistics and transportation, agriculture, etc. Global economies are racing ahead with private 5G industrial deployments but India remains caught up in a web of confusion and policy indecision. The world's largest democracy—renowned for leapfrogging with UPI and Aadhaar—is now on the verge of missing the next digital revolution. While the private 5G opportunity has

moneycontrol

4% spectrum fee, 5-year spectrum assignment risk derailing satellite internet rollout, warns industry body

Calling it a "challenging business situation," Broadband India Forum (BIF) said the move burdens fledgling satcom companies that serve as the last-mile lifeline for connecting unserved and remote areas.

DANISH KHAN | MAY 18, 2025 / 13:23 IST

COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

BIF hails 6 GHz spectrum reform on World Wi-Fi Day 2025

June 24, 2025

In a landmark celebration of World Wi-Fi Day 2025, the Broadband India Forum (BIF) hosted a high-profile conference in New Delhi, spotlighting India's bold spectrum reform and visionary digital infrastructure initiatives. The occasion was marked by the felicitation of the Hon'ble Minister of Communications, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, for his exemplary leadership and in advancing the path breaking initiative of delicensing of the 6GHz spectrum—a move set to ignite a new era of innovation, inclusive access and affordable broadband connectivity.

Recognizing Wi-Fi as a cornerstone of India's digital infrastructure and in line with Hon'ble PM's Vision for Viksit Bharat, the event brought together senior policymakers, regulators, industry leaders, and technology experts to deliberate on the future of Wi-Fi in India— particularly in the context of high indoor data usage, rising mobile tariffs and the urgent need to bridge the digital divide for the net unconnected.

businessline

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INFO-TECH

TRAI's spectrum pricing recommendations a bit stiff on satcom but fair and equitable on the whole: BIF

TRAI has ensured the healthy coexistence of both terrestrial and satellite-based players and made the end consumer the real winner, says BIF president T V Ramachandran

By Vallari Sanzgiri
Updated - May 17, 2025 at 02:42 PM.

tele.net

NEWS

BIF seeks decongestion and policy support at Mumbai's Versova landing station

by tele.net
09 Apr 2025 11:53 IST

Broadband India Forum (BIF) has urged the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to decongest the Versova landing station in Mumbai, where 15 out of 17 international cables are currently concentrated within a 6 km stretch. The industry flagged this clustering as a significant vulnerability, raising concerns over the risk of simultaneous cuts and service disruptions.

In its recommendations, BIF called for subsea cables to be classified as critical telecom infrastructure and proposed that India establish a dedicated indigenous vessel for prompt cable repairs. It also stressed the need for a single-window clearance system to streamline approvals for deployment, repair, and maintenance of subsea cables.

The forum suggested the development of "cable corridors" in high-density regions like Mumbai and Chennai, designated zones that are pre-approved for subsea cable laying, to ease procedural bottlenecks.

Further, BIF recommended identifying and incentivising new cable landing station (CLS) sites along India's extensive coastline to distribute cable landings more evenly. Addressing the cost disparity between various landing sites was also highlighted as a priority.

ETTelecom.com

Broadband India Forum lauds government's move to open 6 GHz spectrum

The 6 GHz band is expected to play a major role in enhancing Wi-Fi services, especially for bandwidth-heavy applications such as online education, remote work, telemedicine, and IoT (Internet of Things).

ANI

New Delhi: On the occasion of World Wi-Fi Day, TV Ramachandran, President of the Broadband India Forum (BIF), hailed the government's recent decision to delicense 500 MHz of the 6 GHz spectrum, calling it a significant move for India's digital future.

COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Unlocking next-gen Wi-Fi — Industry pushes for 6 GHz power and spectrum expansion

June 06, 2025

The technology industry is advocating for a review and enhancement of the power levels permitted for Wi-Fi and other wireless devices operating under India's newly delicensed 6 GHz spectrum band, aiming to align these standards with global best practices.

This push is led by major industry bodies such as the Broadband India Forum (BIF), whose members include tech giants like Meta, Google, Microsoft, and Amazon. The industry's key argument is that current proposed power limits—such as a maximum power spectral density of -5 dBm/MHz and a total transmit power of 14 dBm for very low power devices—are too restrictive and could hamper the performance and affordability of advanced Wi-Fi and wireless devices in India.

According to BIF President TV Ramachandran, higher and more globally consistent power levels would enable a more equitable distribution of devices in both indoor and outdoor environments, while also ensuring that devices remain affordable and widely accessible. He further emphasized that aligning with international standards is essential for India to

ET Telecom.com
From The Economic Times

Mission-critical communications strategically important for India, global community: TRAI's AK Lahoti

The TRAI chief said that infrastructure, policies, spectrum, and standards are being rapidly developed to build integrated, secure national mission-critical communication systems for India.

ETTelecom

Updated On Aug 22, 2025 at 04:27 PM IST

ET Telecom.com
From The Economic Times

Industry • 3 Min Read

Telecom cos, OEMs must collaborate with global players for tech growth: BIF

In June, BIF conveyed to the government in a letter that the telecos are attempting to block the entry of next-generation satellite services into India.

ANI

Published On Aug 24, 2025 at 08:21 PM IST

New Delhi: Indian telecom operators and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) must collaborate with the global players to drive technological progress and deliver greater benefits to the public, said TV Ramachandran, President, Broadband India Forum.

COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

onductor tech centre to boost investments | India's foldable market stays Samsung's even as Huawei, Xiaomi challenge Appl

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Mission-critical communications conference charts national resilience

August 22, 2025

India's First-Ever Mission-Critical Communications Conference, "Safeguard The Future", concluded successfully in New Delhi, setting a powerful stage for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and action toward strengthening the nation's public safety and emergency preparedness infrastructure. Organized by the Broadband India Forum (BIF) in collaboration with TCCA, this landmark event laid the foundation for India to position itself as a global benchmark in mission-critical communications.

Anil Kumar Lahoti, Chairman, TRAI graced the event as Chief Guest. Other esteemed dignitaries at the Inaugural included Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd), PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Member NDMA Board; Manish Aggarwal, Spl. Commissioner, Delhi Police; Sanjai Kumar, CMD, Railtel, and Dr. R.K. Upadhyay, CEO, C-DoT, the conference underscored the critical importance of mission-critical communications in ensuring national security, public safety, and effective disaster response.

In his address, the Chief Guest, Lahoti said, "This subject carries immense strategic importance for both India and the global community as we navigate an era of rising climate vulnerabilities leading to natural disasters, challenges related to communications in

THE HINDU businessline.

Companies / Markets / Portfolio / Opinion / BL Changemakers / PREMIUM

INFOTECH

BIF writes to telecom minister to free up 5875–5905 MHz spectrum for use in vehicles safety

Timely allocation and delicensing of this 20MHz spectrum will also help accelerate industry investment, encourage indigenous innovation and bring Indian road safety practices in line with global standards

By BL New Delhi Bureau

Updated - September 25, 2025 at 08:57 PM

WWW.FINANCIALEXPRESS.COM | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2025

FINANCIAL EXPRESS | COMPANIES 11

Satcom players urge DoT for separate permit

OJASVI GUPTA
New Delhi, September 30

SATELLITE INTERNET SERVICE providers have urged the department of telecommunications (DoT) to create a dedicated licence category for them, stating that the draft telecom authorisation framework risks slowing down growth in the sector and deterring investment.

Broadband India Forum (BIF), which represents companies such as Hughes, OneWeb, Nelco and Viasat, has written to communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, flagging concerns over the draft Telecom Authorisation Rules 2025. It has said that the rules club satellite communication with mainstream telecom services, instead of recognising it as a distinct category.

BIF president TV Ramachandran said the draft rules are inconsistent with the Telecommunications Act 2023, which lists satellite services separately. He added that ignoring this distinction could undermine investor confidence and delay rural and remote connectivity, where satellites remain the only viable option.

The draft rules, issued earlier this month, propose four broad authorisation categories for telecom services – unified, access, Internet, and long distance. Satellite-based operators would fall under these categories and be subject to the same fees, net worth requirements and bank guarantees as terrestrial telecom players. This is despite the satellite sector being much smaller, with only about 300,000 users and annual revenue of ₹600 crore, compared with 1.19 billion subscribers and ₹3.25 lakh crore revenue for mobile and Internet operators.

According to the draft, satellite companies would need to pay an entry fee of ₹12 crore and provide a bank guarantee of ₹44 crore. By contrast, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) had recommended a much lighter framework: ₹50 lakh entry fee, ₹50 lakh bank guarantee and a net worth of ₹1 crore. DoT, however, said a single framework prevents arbitrage, where firms could exploit licence cost differences to offer services beyond their scope. Trai has repeatedly stressed the need for a separate category for satellite telecom services, pointing to their vastly different scale compared with terrestrial operators. The regulator said a lighter licence regime is essential to nurture the nascent industry and ensure fair competition.

A winning formula for digital inclusion

TV RAMACHANDRAN
Hon. fellow, Institution of Engineering and Technology, and president, Broadband India Forum

The BharatNet-PM-Wani combo can bridge our digital divide, empower local economies, and secure India's place as a leader in people-centric digital innovation

BHARATNET, THE world's largest rural optical fibre roll-out project, has quietly been laying the groundwork for India's digital future. Covering about two lakh gram panchayats, with a target of connecting every village, BharatNet delivers high-speed, scalable broadband infrastructure deep into the hinterlands. On top of this backbone for last-mile connectivity, the Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-Wani) decentralises this broadband access. Powered by unlicensed spectrum and light-touch regulations, it is envisioned to offer affordable, open Wi-Fi services through millions of public data offices (PDOs) — local entrepreneurs, kirana shops, and small businesses.

A huge opportunity awaits us in public Wi-Fi. The ruling telecom policy, the National Digital Communications Policy 2018, targeted 10 million hotspots by 2022 and the National 6G Vision has ask-ed for 50 million public Wi-Fi hotspots by 2030. France, a smaller nation, is reported to have 1.3 million public Wi-Fi hotspots, according to data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. Against these benchmarks, India has barely 0.5 million — quite depressing. However, deploying the synergistic duo of BharatNet and PM-Wani, India can be quite optimistic because of the following advantages.

Last mile connectivity, at last within reach: In many rural areas, the economics of mobile towers or private broadband extensions simply don't add up. Sparse populations and difficult terrains deter investments. Using BharatNet and PM-Wani, where once there were connectivity black holes, there can now be Wi-Fi beacons lighting up villages, bus stops, community halls, and marketplaces.

Empowering India's digital citizens: Digital public infrastructure (DPI) initiatives like Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, e-Shram, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, and the upcoming Open Network for Digital Commerce are only as powerful as the connectivity that enables them. PM-Wani hotspots, mini Digital India centres in themselves, can act as the ramps to India's DPI highways, enabling citizens to access banking and government services without travelling long distances, tap into telemedicine consultations, enrol in digital education and skilling programmes, sell products in national digital marketplaces, and more.

Boost to rural entrepreneurship: Through a decentralised army of PDOs, PM-Wani localises ownership of India's digital infrastructure through micro-entrepreneurs, a critical factor for durability.

AWi-Fi access point can cost as little as ₹10,000-20,000. Even modest user fees or bundled service offerings (like selling phone top-ups, digital goods, and content access) can create viable rural businesses if backhaul cost is kept reasonable.

Leapfrogging the mobile-only model: India's mobile data revolution has been remarkable but has led to a somewhat lopsided digital infrastructure. Mobile broadband alone cannot provide the desired level of quality consistency, sustainability, and resilience essential for the next level of digital evolution.

Fixed wireless access (via public Wi-Fi) can deliver higher bandwidth at lower cost; enable richer applications like video-based learning, telehealth diagnostics, and smart agriculture; and support larger, fixed devices like smart TVs, PCs, and Internet of Things hubs. One former communications minister appropriately termed every public Wi-Fi hotspot as a mini data centre by virtue of the amount of data that would be handled by them. The BharatNet-PM-Wani combo allows India to leapfrog beyond mobile-centric access, building a richer, multi-device digital ecosystem.

> **With policy action, public-private collaboration, and strong community engagement, the challenges can be overcome**

Resilient and widespread networks: Unlike centralised mobile networks vulnerable to congestion or disaster-related failures, distributed public Wi-Fi powered by BharatNet creates a resilient, multi-node network. Even if one node fails, others nearby can continue to serve users. In times of crisis — floods, pandemics, disruptions — this decentralised model can be a lifeline for information dissemination and emergency services.

Hurdles remain, such as improving BharatNet's quality, strengthening PDO business models through bundled services and incentives, rationalising tariffs for PDO connections, and enhancing general awareness about public Wi-Fi among users. However, the good news is that none of these are technological dead ends. Solutions are readily available but unused, possibly due to blockages by some incumbents. However, mobile operators need to increasingly use public Wi-Fi to manage the exponentially growing data traffic, not as a fallback but as a strategic component of their networks. AT&T's new partnership with Helium is a shining example. The public looks to the regulator and policymakers to lead the way to affordable, ubiquitous broadband in India. With policy action, public-private collaboration, and strong community engagement, the challenges can be overcome.

If leveraged correctly, the BharatNet-PM-Wani combo can bridge our digital divide, empower local economies, and secure India's place as a leader in people-centric digital innovation. India has rightly earned global admiration for visionary initiatives like UPI and Aadhaar. Now, BharatNet and PM-Wani offer the next leap. A vision emerges of an India where every village has multiple Wi-Fi hotspots bustling with users accessing healthcare, education, entertainment, banking, and digital commerce; lakhs of rural entrepreneurs run small but profitable digital services businesses; and DPI reaches every Indian, not just the urban elite. The common man is waiting for this vision to be realised.

Research inputs by Shrabbitha Sadagopan, deputy director, communications & policy, Broadband India Foundation. Views are personal.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS | Fri, 16 May 2025 | https://epaper.financialexpress.com/c/77374267

thehindubusinessline.

New telecom policy lacks ambition, inclusiveness

NTP 2025 focuses more on expanding 4G/5G mobile networks than fixed, fibre, WiFi or other technologies

TV Ramachandran

India's telecom policies, from NTP 1994 through NTP 1999 to NDCP (National Digital Communications Policy) 2018, have historically served as a mirror to the nation's growing telecom and digital aspirations.

The NDCP 2018 was the first to make a bold and ambitious blueprint for plain old telecom's vital linkages with digital and also one that placed the citizen at the centre of a transformative vision — universal broadband, inclusive growth, and global leadership in emerging technologies.

Fast forward to 2025, and we are staring at a disquieting backward shift in tone and ambition. The draft National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2025 — currently under discussion — seems to have forsaken the synergistic connection with digital and appears to have lost the spirit that made NDCP 2018 so path-breaking.

DILUTED VISION

The most glaring dilution lies in the policy vision statement itself. NDCP 2018 declared its intent "to unlock the transformative power of digital communications networks — to achieve the goal of digital empowerment and improve well-being of the people of India...", whereas the draft NTP 2025 merely makes the bland offer of transforming "India as a telecom product nation".

Of course, it goes on to state "that is driven by innovation and that universally connects its citizens meaningfully, securely, and sustainably" and that it would "build upon... NDCP 2018" but the strategies and goals outlined do not appear to support this claim.

NDCP 2018's strength was were it a concrete, time-bound framework for targets to achieve by 2022, universal broadband access at 50 Mbps, 1 Gbps connectivity for all Gram Panchayats, and the creation of four million jobs and many other specific goals. These were bold, measurable, and offered a roadmap to accountability. Yes, we have failed to achieve some of them but, where has accountability gone? Are the mission and the targets to be downgraded?

The draft NTP 2025 offers no numerical commitment to rural broadband, no mention of affordability, and no plan to bridge the digital divide. The omission does not seem accidental — it signals a worrying execution fatigue.

Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia declared on June 24 that WiFi is the "invisible power creating visible change" and that "WiFi should stand for Widespread Inclusion for Future India". In contrast, Draft NTP slashes Public WiFi Hotspots (PWH) goal to one million by 2030 from 10 million in 2022 (NDCP 2018) and 30 million in 2030 (Prime Minister's 6G Vision). How can true inclusivity and universal connectivity happen?

Again, from the goal of 50 per cent households to have fixed broadband by 2022, draft NTP'25 seeks fixed broadband in only 10 crore households (less than 30 per cent) and, that too only by 2030!

NDCP 2018 had a clear thrust on marginalised communities, women and persons with disabilities. All these people have lost out in draft NTP 2025. On affordability, there is mention of ensuring that telecom broadband services cost at less than 2 per cent of monthly Gross National Income per capita, overlooking the large disparity between rural and urban incomes.

PEBBLE GOALS

Adequate fibre is an accepted top priority for any advanced digital economy. India lags heavily on this front. Rightly therefore, NDCP stressed a Fibre First Initiative and the goal of laying 50 lakh OFC by 2022. Sadly however, there is no mention of this crucial aspect in draft NTP 2025.

The draft NTP 2025 treats telecom as an end in itself, rather than as a catalyst for national transformation. Moreover, it seems to focus only on expanding 4G/5G mobile networks, not fixed or fiber or WiFi or other technologies.

India's telecom sector doesn't need regulatory housekeeping masquerading as policy. The government must take this opportunity to review its draft NTP 2025 and reclaim the spirit of NDCP 2018 — with proper accountability and corrective steps.

The writer is President of Broadband India Forum. Views expressed are personal

India overthinking private 5G demand

FE 23/7/2025

TV RAMACHANDRAN

Hon. Fellow, Institution of Engineering and Technology, and president, Broadband India Forum

It's time to stop using studies as a smokescreen to delay or stifle an established good initiative. A truly digital India cannot be built by stalling innovation

THE RECENT REVIVAL of plans to conduct a demand estimation study for private 5G networks in India might sound like a reasonable step on paper, but make no mistake—this is not a fresh initiative, it's a replay of an old exercise from nearly three years ago. The government first spoke of assessing industrial demand for private 5G earlier back as 2023. Since then, little has moved on the ground despite rising interest from Indian industry and a clear global momentum.

Now, in 2025, talk of launching the same study again—without any intention policy actions—risks looking less like consultation and more like procrastination. This time, it must be called out for what it increasingly resembles: a delaying tactic, likely influenced by resistance from certain quarter of the establishment that continue to view private 5G as a threat rather than an opportunity.

The world has moved on

Across the globe, private 5G has emerged as a game-changer for smart factories, logistics hubs, energy utilities, ports, airports, and research campuses. What sets apart the leading nations is not just their recognition of demand but their decisiveness. Germany conducted consultations in 2018 and acted by 2019 — reserving 100 megahertz in the 3.7–3.8 gigahertz (GHz) band for enterprises. There are over 3,700 licences there today. China is reported to have over 40,000 private 5G deployments till date. Japan, through pilot projects and demand surveys, reflects a local 5G spectrum mix of 4.6 and 28 GHz bands, backed it with subsidies, and has issued 147 licences. The UK introduced a Shared Access licensing model and released on-demand spectrum based on industrial expressions of interest, without spending time on a study. The US had no centralised study but it enabled widespread adoption (900 deployments) through the dynamic CBRS (Citizens Broadband Radio Service) framework in the 3.5 GHz band. Korea has, in the 4.7 GHz spectrum, about 100 (3)enterprise 5G licences.

India, conversely, has spent more time debating the need for a study than others spent going from demand assessment to deployment.

Industrial demand is evident

It is disingenuous to suggest that India still lacks evidence of demand for private 5G. Several indicators contradict this claim.

Major players in sectors such as automotive, information technology, logistics, airports, mining, and ports have applied for experimental licences to use private 5G networks over the past three years. Solutions like Network as a Service are readily available for faster delivery of private 5G.

Several industry associations have submitted position papers, participated in Telecom Regulatory Authority of India consultations, and highlighted use cases that would benefit from dedicated or lightly licensed spectrum access. India's digital-as-a-data-driving policy itself hinges on deploying next-gen connectivity for smart factories—which cannot be achieved through public network access.

If the purpose of a demand study is to identify use cases, assess readiness, and understand constraints, much of this information is already publicly available or easily extractable from pilot deployments.

Studies no substitute for policy

No one argues against evidence-based policymaking. But repeated studies without execution reflect bureaucratic loop-backs, not prudence. In fact, the timing of this renewed talk of a demand estimation study comes suspiciously close to mounting pressure from telcos opposing any direct private 5G spectrum access to enterprises.

If India delays action until after yet another study, we risk losing industrial competitiveness, particularly in manufacturing clusters that are looking for low-latency, high-reliability connectivity, as well as forfeiting the chance to develop a domestic ecosystem of 5G radios, core networks, system integrators, and managed service providers for enterprise-grade networks. We would also send a signal to global investors that India is not ready to walk the talk on smart infrastructure.

Instead of launching a fresh study from scratch, the government should consider a phased policy roll-out.

Phase 1: Open up spectrum on a pilot basis in high-priority bands (e.g. 3.7–3.8 GHz band, 24 GHz band, etc.) for industrial zones, ports, and campuses.

Phase 2: Allow administratively, direct spectrum access to enterprises through light licensing, not frighten them away with talk of licensing and/or auction. Those latter will obviously benefit only the deep-pocketed.

Phase 3: Create a regulatory sandbox that balances enterprise access with safeguards for incumbent operators.

India should lead, not lag

India has no shortage of talent, ambition, or need for private 5G. Calls not policy is absent here. What is lacking is execution. The notion that we must first "study" demand before acting ignores both the weight of existing evidence and the lessons of global best practices. Did we do it before introducing retail 2G, 3G, 4G, or 5G? It's time to stop using studies as a smokescreen to delay or stifle an established good initiative. A truly digital India cannot be built by stalling innovation in the name of consultation and study. The clock is ticking—and in the digital economy, delay in action is not harmless. It is costly and irreparably harmful to the nation and the consumers.

Views are personal

thehindubusinessline.

Satcom: India's game-changer for inclusivity

By blending the reach of satellites with the capacity of terrestrial networks, India can achieve true universal connectivity

TV Ramachandran

India's satellite communication (Satcom) sector is poised for a historic leap. A flood of proactive Government initiatives, massive private investments, cutting-edge space-tech breakthroughs, and surging demand are pushing it into the national spotlight. The IN-SPACe Industry Decadal Vision is for capture of 5 per cent of the global market by the Indian space economy reaching $44 billion by 2033 with Satcom contributing a staggering $14.4 billion by then.

By December 2025, India could witness a tidal wave of Satcom services from new entrants. Heavyweights like Bharti-backed Eutelsat OneWeb, Reliance Jio-SES, Elon Musk's Starlink and Amazon Kuiper are actively pursuing full approvals and spectrum for launch of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) services.

Satcom spectrum isn't like terrestrial mobile networks. Satcom operates on shared spectrum, coordinated globally by ITU, Overseas prevent interference. Almost all countries, including the US, Mexico, and Brazil, allocate it administratively — a proven, globally accepted method. Attempts at auctions have nearly failed.

The Telecommunications Act 2023 rightly stipulates administrative assignment for Satcom. However, it is also important to have the price set low otherwise it could choke investment and derail India's inclusivity goals for connecting the unconnected. The fee should be purely cost-based — which is usually only 0.1–0.2 per cent of revenue — just enough to cover administration and regulation cost, not to make profits to fill treasury coffers.

UPFRONT INVESTMENT

While satellites are far cheaper to build and launch than they were two decades ago — thanks to modern technologies — there is still a challenge regarding scale. Unlike terrestrial networks, a satellite constellation demands hefty upfront investments while serving markets that are less dense and less profitable. Handsets and terminals are pricier too. This is why Satcom should never be seen as a "rival" to mobile networks. Their strengths are fundamentally different. Terrestrial networks thrive in dense, high-capacity urban zones. Satellites excel in remote, sparse, and tough-to-reach regions.

Think Delhi's Metro vs. its buses — both move people but serve entirely different needs. One never huge volumes quickly; the other reaches every last corner. Neither can replace the other — but together, they make the city truly connected. So, it is with telcos and Satcom.

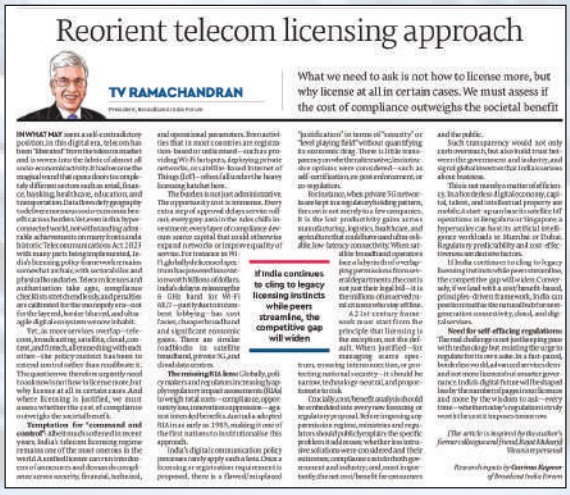
Terrestrial networks have done a splendid job but there are remote locations, mountains, deserts, oceans, and forested regions where mobile towers just aren't practical. Here, Satcom becomes the magic carpet — delivering coverage without building a single tower.

During floods, earthquakes, or cyclones, when ground infrastructure collapses, Satcom can be the only lifeline. It can plug isolated base stations back into the core telecom network. It can connect oil rigs, mining operations, and agricultural IoT systems deep in the hinterland. It can be Bharat Net's secret weapon in places where fibre simply can't go. It can secure our borders by keeping defence forces connected in high-altitude and forward areas.

India's digital divide still stands at 56 per cent ('TRAI, March 2025'). Bridging it isn't just about fairness — it's about unlocking economic opportunity for millions. Satcom won't cannibalise the telecom market; it will grow the pie. By blending the reach of satellites with the capacity of terrestrial networks, India can achieve true universal and meaningful connectivity. The best way forward would be to allocate spectrum expeditiously with no overpricing that scares away investment and encourage peaceful coexistence and competition! — not false competition — between terrestrial and satellite operators. The common goal of all should be to leverage Satcom for national interests like Digital India, BharatNet, disaster management, and defence.

Satcom is not a competitor — it's a force multiplier. If we get the policy, pricing, and partnerships right, India could genuinely enjoy the best of both worlds: the power of terrestrial networks and the reach of the skies. The opportunity is here. The technology is ready. The players are primed. All that remains is for India to give the final go-ahead — and let Satcom take off to bridge India's divide.

The author is Hon. Fellow, IET (London), and President, Broadband India Forum. Views are personal. Research input by Gaurav Kapoor



Reorient telecom licensing approach

TV RAMACHANDRAN

President, Broadband India Forum

What we need to ask is not how to license more, but why license at all in certain cases. We must assess if the cost of compliance outweighs the societal benefit

IN WHAT MAY seem a self-contradictory position, in this digital era, telecom has been "liberalised" from its monopolistic mould and, is woven into the fabric of almost all socio-economic activity. It is also one of the magical wand that opens doors to completely different sectors such as retail, finance, banking, healthcare, education, and transportation. Data flows defy geography to deliver enormous socio-economic benefits across borders. Let's even think of a connected world, notwithstanding admirable achievements on many fronts and a historic Telecommunications Act 2023 with many parts being implemented, India's licensing policy framework remains somewhat archaic, with sectoralities and siloed thoroughfares. Telecom licenses and authorisation take ages, compliance checklists stretch endlessly, and penalties are calibrated for the monopoly era—not for the layered, border-blurred, and disruptive digital ecosystem we now inhabit.

Yet...as more services overlap—telecom, broadcasting, satellite, cloud, content, and fintech, all crowding with each other—the policy instinct has been to extend control rather than recalibrate it. The question is: Are these the right policy and tools? Do we know how to license more, but why license at all in certain cases. And where licensing is justified, we must assess whether the cost of compliance outweighs the societal benefit.

Temptation for "command and control"

Albeit in such a cluttered environment, India's telecom licensing regime remains one of the most onerous in the world. A multitude of taxes on revenue, an excess of annual users and domain disqualifications across security, financial, technical, and operational parameters. Bureaucracies that in most countries are registration bodies have ballooned—such as providing Wi-Fi hotspots, deploying private networks, or satellite-based Internet of Things (IoT)—often call under the heavy licensing hatchet here.

The burden is not just administrative. The opportunity cost is immense. Every extra step of approval delays service rollout; every gray area in the rules chills investment; every layer of compliance deters scarce capital that could otherwise expand networks or improve quality of service. For instance in 90-plus globally developed countries, citizens have possessed low-cost access to billions of dollars. India's delay in mmWave (24 GHz) band for Wi-Fi 6E/7—arguably the most consequential lobbying—has cost farmers, cheaper broadband and significant economic gains. There are similar roadblocks in satellite broadband, private 5G, and cloud data centres.

The emerging EIA lense Globally, policymakers and regulators increasingly apply regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) to weigh total costs—compliance, opportunity loss, innovation suppression—against benefits. Canada adopted RIA in as early as 1985, making it one of the first nations to institutionalise this approach.

India's digital communication policy framework can rarely apply such a lens. Every licensing or registration requirement is proposed, there is a flawed/misplaced "justification" in terms of "security" or "level playing field" without quantifying its economic drag. There is little transparency on whether the alternative/less intrusive options were considered—such as self-certification, ex-post enforcement, or no regulation.

Bottom line, when private 5G networks have kept managed by holding patterns, the cost is not merely to a few companies. It is the lost productivity gains across manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, and agriculture that could have used ultra-reliable, low-latency connectivity. When satellite broadband operators face a labyrinth of overlapping permissions from several departments, the cost is not just their legal bill—it is the millions of unserved rural citizens who may still face digital exclusion.

A 21st century framework must start from the principle that licensing is the exception, not the default. When justified—for managing scarce spectrum, ensuring interconnection, or protecting national security—it should be narrow, technology-neutral, and proportionate to risk.

Crucially, cost/benefit analysis should be embedded into every new licensing or regulatory proposal. Before imposing any permission regime, ministries and regulators should publicly explain the specific problem it aid ensure, whether less intrusive solutions were considered and their minimum, compliance costs both on government and industry; and, most importantly the net cost/benefit for consumers and the public.

Such transparency would not only curb overreach, but also build trust between the government and industry, and signal global investors that India is serious about business.

This is not merely a matter of efficiency. In a borderless digital economy, capital, talent, and intellectual property are mobile. A start-up or investor's choice of operations in Bengaluru or Singapore or a hyperscaler can be its artificial intelligence workloads in Mumbai or Dubai. Regulatory predictability and cost-effectiveness are decisive factors.

If India continues to cling to legacy licensing instincts while peers streamline, the competitive gap will widen. The choice is not between regulation and none but between smarter governance in a digital future will be shaped by the framework we put in place today and more by the wisdom to ask—every time—whether today's regulations are truly serving the national interest or merely preserving the past.

(The article is inspired by the author's former colleague and friend, Kapil Aklavya. Views are personal)

Research inputs by Gaurav Kapoor of Broadband India Forum

MEDIANAMA LATEST WORKSHOP NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS REASONED

Government should create a separate satcom authorisation category for satellite services: Broadband India Forum

MEDIANAMA LATEST WORKSHOP NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS REASONED

BIF Backs OpenAI In ANI Copyright Lawsuit, Says LLM Outputs Are 'Acts of Skill', Not Infringement

COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

BIF, UWB, Qualcomm seek 6GHz delicensing; telcos push for auction

A growing divide has emerged within India's telecom ecosystem over the future of the 6GHz spectrum. While industry group Broadband India Forum (BIF), global entities such as the Ultra Wide Band (UWB) Alliance, and companies including Qualcomm advocate for delicensing the band, major telecom operators continue to push for full auction-based allocation.

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COMPANY WIRE

BIF appoints Alka Selot Asthana as new vice president

by tele.net
03 Dec 2025 17:44 IST

Broadband India Forum (BIF) has announced the appointment of Alka Selot Asthana, global head, regulatory, Tata Communications Limited, as the new vice president of BIF at its 18th annual general meeting held on November 25, 2025

T.V. Ramachandran, president, BIF welcomed Asthana's induction into the leadership, noting that her extensive regulatory expertise and experience across global communication systems as a powerful addition to the BIF's leadership. Selot brings over 30 years of leadership across the telecommunications sector. TV Ramachandran noted that she will significantly strengthen BIF's mission of enabling a future-ready, innovation-driven broadband ecosystem for India.

Commenting on her appointment, Asthana expressed her gratitude for the opportunity, noting that BIF's mission is "close to her heart" and its leadership "truly inspiring." She added that she looks forward to working with the Forum to advance its goals and strengthen its role as a leading industry think tank.

PTI

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Home > Business > BIF slams SIM-binding directions for msg.... Back

BIF slams SIM-binding directions for msg apps; calls for talks, pause on implementation timelines

NEW DELHI: (Dec 2) Broadband India Forum on Tuesday flagged "serious concerns" over the government directive mandating a continuous, active SIM for use of messaging apps, and urged the Centre to pause implementation timelines and hold stakeholder consultations on the SIM-binding issue.

Broadband India Forum (BIF) said that, while well-intentioned in its stated goal of curbing cyber-fraud originating from abroad, the directions raise significant questions of jurisdiction, consumer impact, and risk, creating obligations that extend far beyond the mandate of the Telecom Act or the purpose of the Telecom Cyber Security Rules.

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PRESS RELEASE

Government decision to delicense lower 6 GHz band to benefit end-user economy, says BIF

by tele.net
23 Jan 2026 16:51 IST

Broadband India Forum (BIF) has welcomed the government's decision to delicense the Lower 6 GHz band, as notified by the Ministry of Communications vide the Gazette Notification dated 20 January 2026, issued on 21.01.2026. The decision makes the 5925–6425 MHz frequency band available on a license-exempt basis for low-power indoor and very low-power indoor wireless access systems, including radio local area networks.

President, BIF, said, "The industry has waited for over three years for the delicensing of the 6 GHz band. This is one of the most important telecom decisions to match and excel technological advancements and aim high for the common man. The notification reflects a process of detailed deliberation and stakeholder consultations conducted over the past three years which was extremely beneficial for arriving at such balanced outcomes that take into account consumer interests, development of the digital economy especially R&D, startups & innovation and national interest"

He remarked, "This decision would greatly benefit the common man as it would help bridge indoor outdoor divide since higher mobile frequencies associated with 5G/6G have poor penetration indoors and the common man consumes 80 per cent or more indoors. 6GHz Wifi will be able to overcome the deficiencies and provide full access to modern apps and data intensive applications indoors."

businessline.

Companies / Markets / Portfolio / Opinion / BL Changemakers / PREMIUM

INFO-TECH

SIM-linking offers limited cybersecurity in exchange of disrupted user experience: BIF

"A more effective measure would be strong SIM-KYC enforcement, and coordinated enforcement across telecom operators, financial intermediaries, and law-enforcement agencies," said Broadband India Forum

By Vallari Sanzgiri
Updated - December 02, 2025 at 04:20 PM

VOICE&DATA

BIF backs lower 6 GHz delicensing move, Wi-Fi 6E/7 set to gain

Khushnanda Parth

10 · bl · news

businessline.

Industry bodies hail govt's decision to de-license 6 GHz spectrum for Wi-Fi

SHOT IN THE ARM. The move is expected to boost Wi-Fi services in the country.

COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

BIF urges DoT to revisit new cybersecurity, SIM binding rules

Big Tech industry body – Broadband India Forum – has written to the DOT Secretary Amit Agarwal terming the Telecommunications (Telecom Cyber Security) Amendment Rules, 2025 as unconstitutional and beyond the scope of the Telecom Act. BIF counts companies like Amazon, Google, Meta, Whatsapp and Microsoft as its member companies.

COMMUNICATIONS TODAY

chip demand goal hinges on supply chain, JM Financial · MTNL starts self-funding interest on 5G bonds, clears old vend

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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Subsea cables, cloud, and AI – India's invisible trade routes of the future

February 24, 2026

VOICE&DATA

NEWS · OPINION · INTERVIEW · INDUSTRY · ENTERPRISE · 5G · POLICY · EVENTS

News

BIF meet focuses on subsea cables and digital cloud

BIF's convergent conference examined subsea cables and cloud infrastructure, highlighting policy coordination, resilience and India's growing AI-driven data needs.

Voice&Data Bureau
24 Feb 2026 14:16 IST

tele.net

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PRESS RELEASE

BIF hosts first Convergent conference on subsea cables and digital cloud infrastructure

The Broadband India Forum (BIF) convened its first convergent conference on subsea cables and digital cloud infrastructure under the theme "Connecting Continents, Scaling Digital Cloud," bringing together senior government officials, regulators including the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), and industry leaders from Google, Meta, Constl, Lightstorm, NEC, Ciena, and Tata Communications Limited, to deliberate on strengthening India's global connectivity and digital infrastructure backbone.

Commenting on the conference, chairman, TRAI, said, "Subsea cables and digital cloud are no longer parallel infrastructures; they are interdependent engines of growth. Subsea cables carry 95 per cent of the world's data traffic, and as India surpasses 1 billion broadband subscribers, the demand for low-latency, hyperscale cloud services grows with it. With 268 Tbps of activated capacity and projected 7.4 per cent growth in subsea infrastructure, India is building the foundation for a sovereign, sustainable, and globally connected digital economy."

Resilient Subsea Networks Critical To India's AI, Digital Ambitions: TRAI Chairman Lahoti

India seeks to create conducive environment for submarine cable investments, says TRAI's AK Lahoti

FORTUNE

Resilient subsea networks critical to India's AI, digital ambitions: TRAI Chairman Lahoti

Resilient subsea networks critical to India's AI ambitions: TRAI

बीआईएफ ने होस्ट की पहली कन्वर्जेंट कॉन्फ्रेंस

INDIAN EXPRESS

Resilient subsea networks critical to India's AI, digital ambitions: TRAI Chairman Lahoti

NEW DELHI, 24 FEB (UNI)- Dignitaries pose for a group photograph during the inaugural Convergent Conference on Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure, organised by the Broadband India Forum (BIF), focusing on strengthening and advancing India's digital backbone at Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi on Tuesday, UNI PHOTO-102L

Advocacy Through Articles

Apr 2025 - Mar 2026

APRIL 2025

- Industry Readiness to Harness the Power of AI: Opportunity and Challenges | ASCI - ADNext Report
- Building an AI-ready Digital Infrastructure — India's digital imperative | Communications Today
- India's odyssey to a robust personal data protection regime | Voice&Data

MAY 2025

- India's Wi-Fi Gap: The missing link to Digital India | Voice&Data
- A winning formula for digital inclusion | Financial Express

JUNE 2025

- Mr. T.V. Ramachandran Shares His Perspective on the Role of Mobile Phones in Society and the Effects of Smartphone Addiction on the Populace | Interview with The Aware Consumer
- Industry Readiness to Harness the Power of AI: Opportunity and Challenges | Voice&Data

JULY 2025

- Private 5G: India doesn't need another study to prove demand, it needs action | tele.net
- Securing India's critical communications future | Communications Today
- India overthinking private 5G demand | Financial Express
- New Telecom Policy lacks ambition, inclusiveness | The Hindu Business Line

August 2025

- Cybersecurity Rules Important but must not overreach: A plea for proportionality and legislative alignment | Communications Today
- Fibre First: Rethinking India's Broadband Backbone | Voice&Data
- BIF President's Interview at the First Mission Critical Communications Conference | ANI News

September 2025

- Reorient telecom licensing approach | Financial Express

October 2025

- Toward a Seamless and User-Friendly Public Wi-Fi Fabric: As the UPI of Telecom | Communications Today
- When Every Second Counts, India's Mission Network | Voice&Data

November 2025

- Connectivity to Capability Building: India's Digital Backbone for Viksit Bharat @ 2047 | tele.net

December 2025

- Li-Fi - Lighting the next frontier of wireless connectivity | Communications Today
- Unshackling Satcom: The Policy Reset India Needs for Viksit Bharat | Voice&Data

January 2026

- INDIA'S 2030 SPECTRUM PLAN BACKS 6G, STUMBLES ON WI-FI | Voice&Data

February 2026

- BharatNet's backbone of fibre connectivity fully in place: PM-WANI Wi-Fi now a must to complete the mission | Communications Today (Co-authored with Dr. Satya N. Gupta, Professor of Practice, South Asian University & Chairman of the BIF Rural Digital Initiatives Committee)
- Fight Against Fraud: Can SIM-binding resolve the problem? | tele.net

March 2026

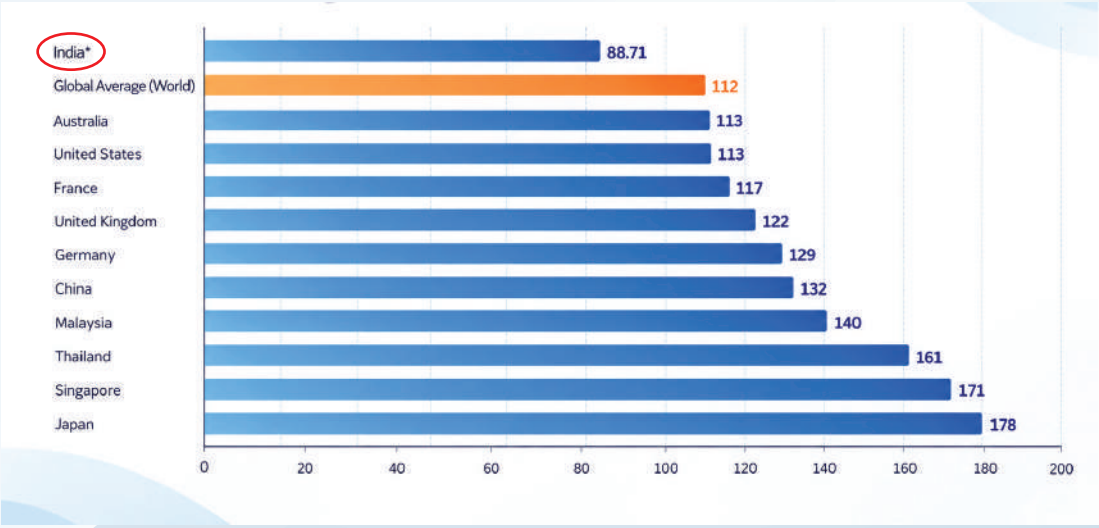
- 5G's Next Test: Turning Infrastructure into real returns | Voice & Data

Telecom Sector-Stats & Insights (FY 2025-26)

1. Fixed Broadband Penetration: India and the world

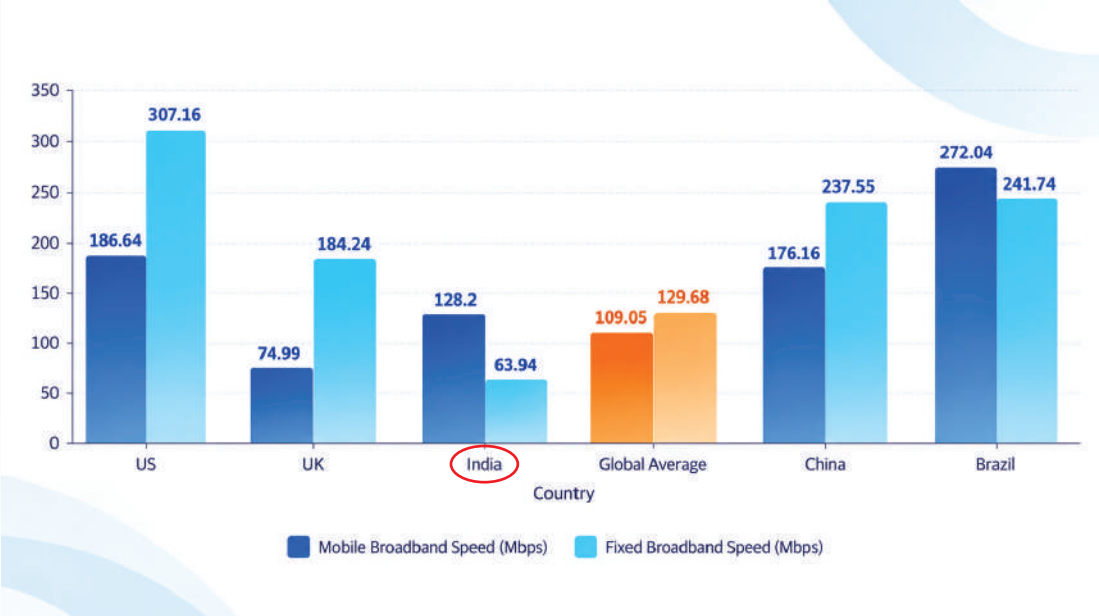
Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Measuring Digital Development: ICT DataHub – Fixed Broadband Subscriptions per 100 Inhabitants, 2025.

2. Mobile Cellular Subscriptions: India and the world



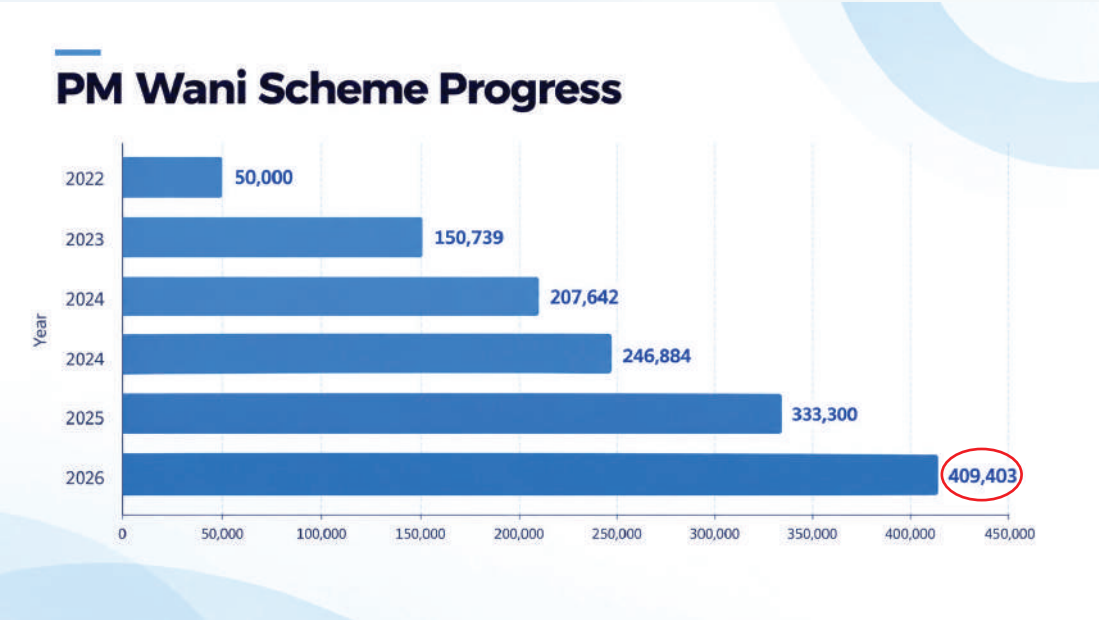
Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Measuring Digital Development: ICT DataHub – Mobile-cellular Subscriptions (per 100 Inhabitants), 2025.
*TRAI PIR 22 June 2026 PIB release

3. Fixed Broadband Speed and Mobile Broadband Speed (Median)-India vs Global



Source: Ookla Speedtest Global Index, Median Country Speeds, August 2026
India's MBB speed is comparable to and currently above the global median, while its FBB speed remains significantly below the global median
Note: In India there are advertised FBB plans of higher speeds but majority of customers avail 30-40 Mbps speed plans, and Ookla Speedtest reflects the median value which may be the reason for low speeds being reflected.

4.Proliferation of WiFI- PM Wani Scheme

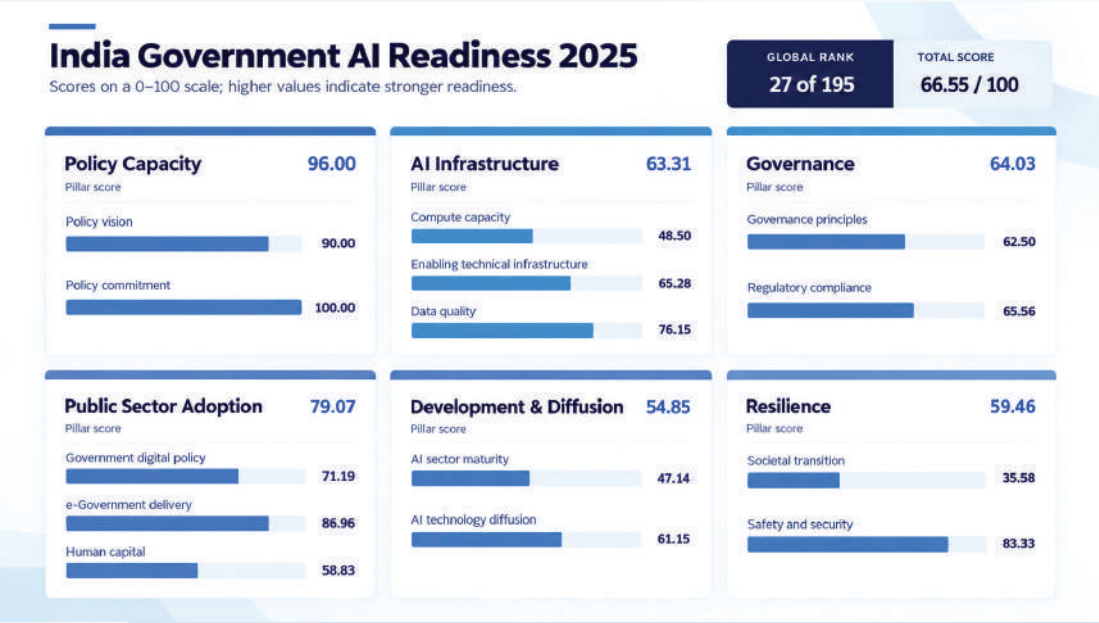


Source: PM Wani Central Registry

5. Internet penetration -Urban Rural India. Internet Subscribers per 100 Population: Total, Urban and Rural India

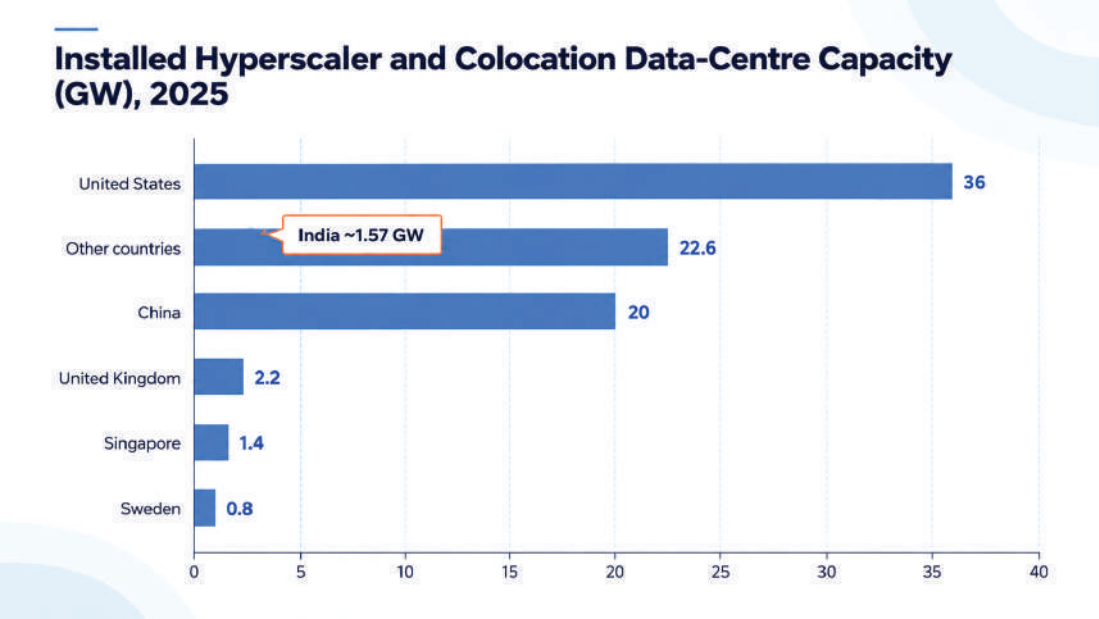
Sources: DoT, Telecom at a Glance, Table 1.10 and TRAI, January–March 2026 report. In March 2026, India had about 77 internet subscriptions per 100 people: 127 urban and 48 rural.
Note: The Urban Rural gap has increased by ~13% between 2025 and 2026.

6. Government AI Readiness Index 2025

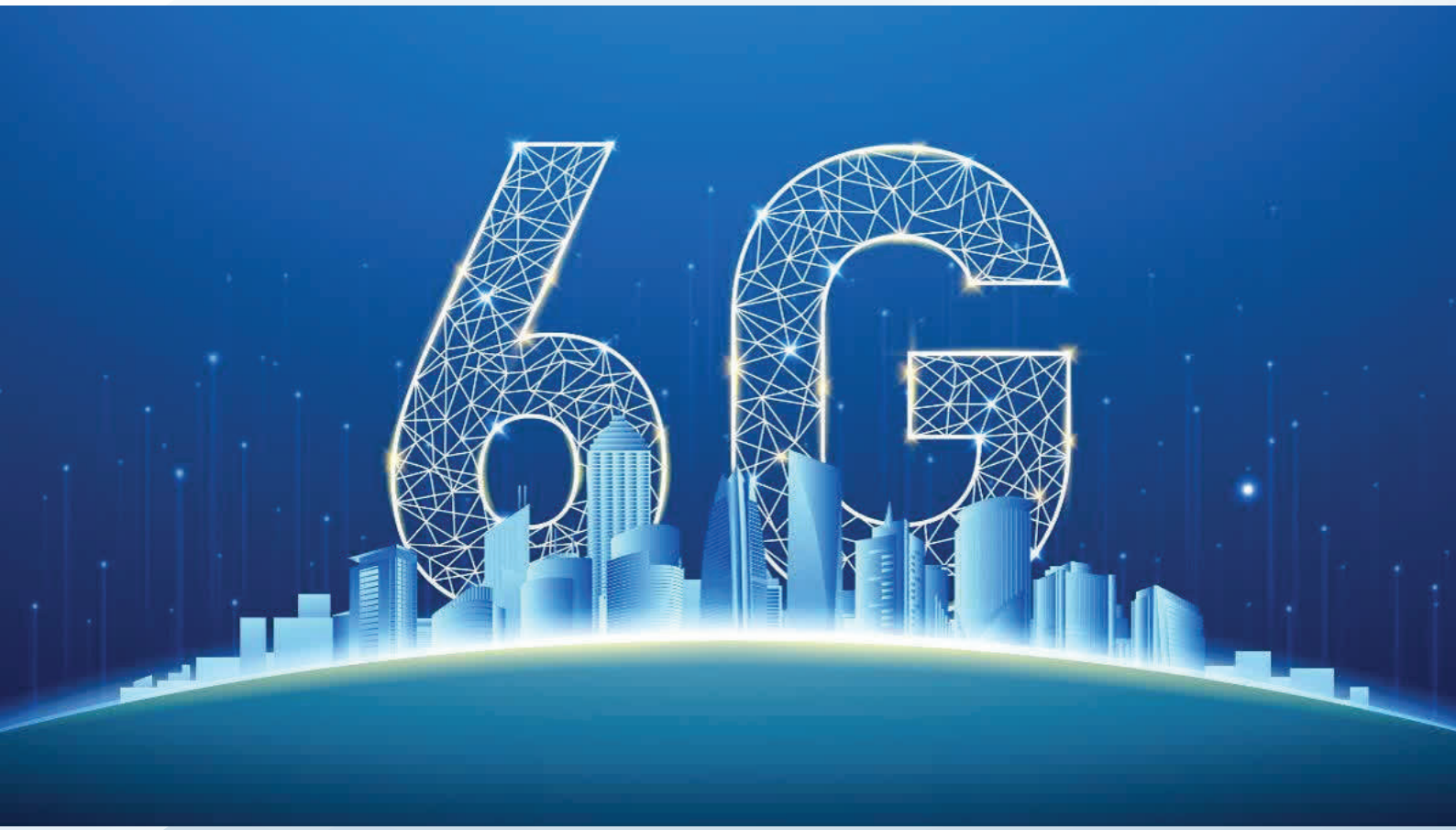


Source: Government AI Readiness Index 2025, Oxford Insights
Methodology: The 2025 Index assesses 195 governments using 69 indicators across 14 dimensions and six pillars—Policy Capacity, Governance, AI Infrastructure, Public-Sector Adoption, Development and Diffusion, and Resilience.
Note: India rose sharply from 46th in 2024 to 27th in 2025, an improvement of 19 positions.

7. Data Centres: India and the World



Source: McKinsey Global Institute, Colocation Data Centers: The Infrastructure Race Behind AI, June 2026.
India (2026): 1.575 GW operational capacity, Government of India/PIB, August 2026



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As on March 31, 2026

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T.V. Ramachandran
President - BIF

Rajiv Aggarwal
Vice President – BIF

Alka Selot Asthana
Vice President – BIF

Dr. Satya N. Gupta
Treasurer - BIF

Ashwani Rana
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Founder VP - BIF

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Arun Seth

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G.K. Agarwal

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Dr. BM Baveja

Amrita Choudhary

PK Garg

Dr. Archana Goyal Gulati

Alok Gupta

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Ravi Kant

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Rajesh Mehrotra

JV Ramamurthy

KV Seshasayee

Dr.Kuldip Singh

Dr. Mahesh Uppal

Valsa William

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Debashish Bhattacharya

Additional Director General

Arun Mukarji

Senior Director – Operations

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Director – Administration & Govt. Affairs

Rajiv Kumar Markan

Dy. Director – Coordination

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Dy. Director- Finance and Administration

Mohit Kumar

Sr. Executive - IT & Administration

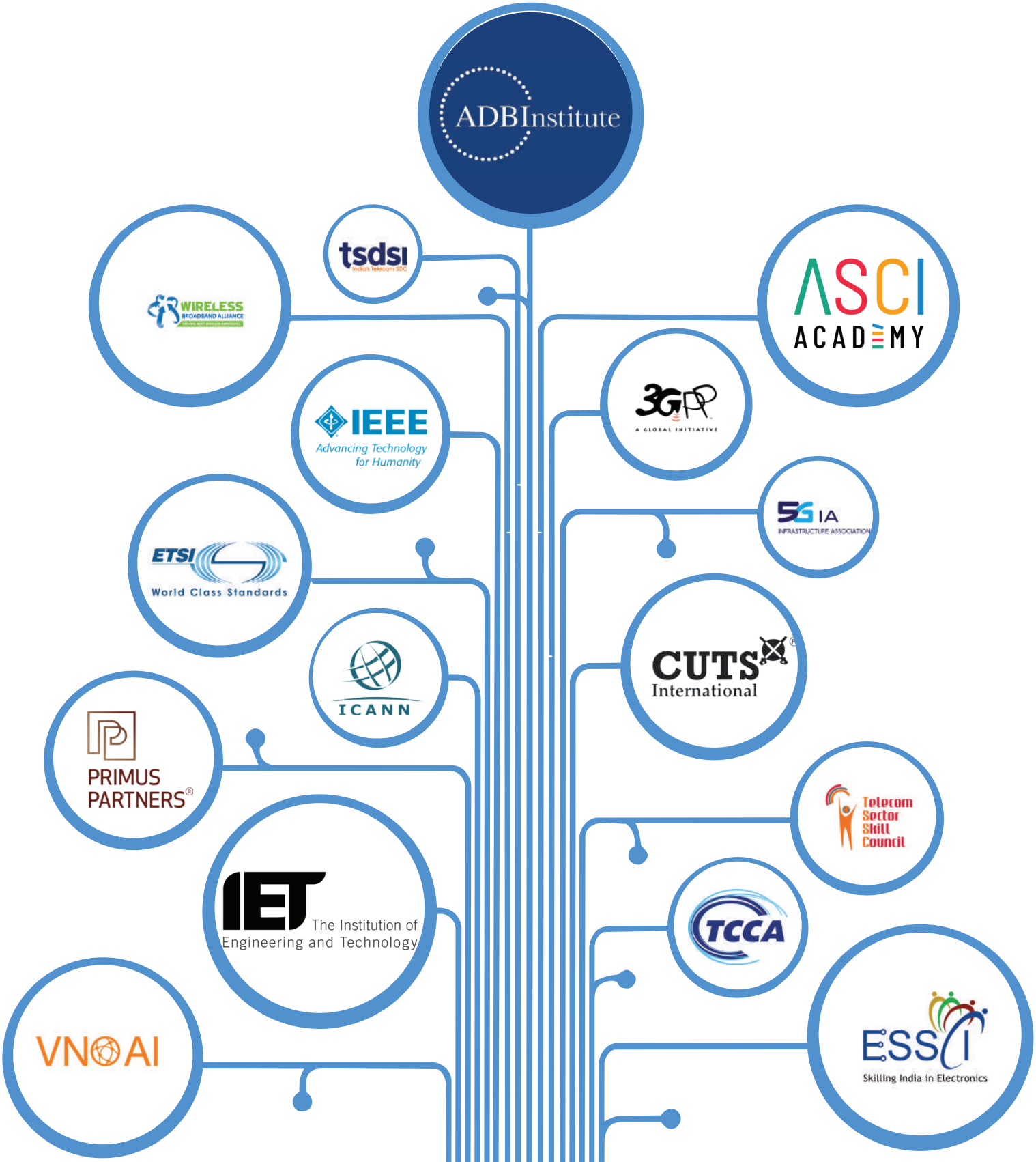
BIF Committees

As on March 31, 2026

- Accessibility & Inclusion (PwD)
- Broadband Infrastructure
- Broadcasting
- Cyber Security
- Data Center
- Device Ecosystem
- FTTX & IBS
- ICAG (Internet Content, Applications & Governance)
- Internet Exchange
- Manufacturing Network
- New Technologies
- Rural Digital Initiatives
- Satcom
- Spectrum & Regulatory Framework
- Startup & MSME
- Subsea Cable
- Trust and Safety
- Wi-Fi
- Working Group on Academia & Standards

Partnerships & Engagements

As on March 31, 2026



Reports & Publications

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"Think Tank for Digital Transformation"

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