THE WEEKLY NEWS SUMMARY
IAFI News

Fifth Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24) on World Standardization Day

On the occasion of World Standardization Day, held annually on 14th October, Fifth Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24) ceremony was held in vibrant New Delhi, one day prior to WTSA-24. Event was chaired by Dr. Rajkumar Upadhyay, CEO and Chairman Project Board at the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT). GSS is a dynamic forum that brings together thought leaders, innovators, and decision-makers from around the world, open to both ITU members and non-members. Theme of this year event was "Charting the Next Digital Wave: Emerging Technologies, Innovation, and International Standards".

This inspiring gathering set the stage for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24), which is going on from 15 to 24 October 2024 at Bharat Mandappam and Hall-14 in New Delhi, India.

Inauguration of WTSA-24

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) yesterday, alongside the India Mobile Congress (IMC), Asia's largest technology expo. WTSA will be held from October 15th to 24th, 2024. WTSA is the governing conference for the standardization work of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Agency for Digital Technologies, organized every four years. This year's WTSA-24 is a crucial event that will shape the future of telecommunications and ICT standards on a global scale. It brings together over 3300 delegates, including 36 ministers, from 160 countries, making it the largest WTSA assembly ever. It is for the first time that the ITU-WTSA is being hosted in India and the Asia-Pacific. The main focus of WTSA-24 is on next-generation technologies, including 6G, satellite communications, quantum technology, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), all essential for a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

In his inaugural speech, the Hon'ble Prime Minister extended his best wishes to all, highlighting India's remarkable digital progress. With a staggering 1.2 billion mobile phone users, 950 million internet users, and 40% of the world's real-time digital transactions happening within the country, India has truly embraced the digital age.

Hon'ble Prime Minister recalled about his visionary Digital India initiative, launched 10 years ago, which aimed for a holistic approach with four key pillars. The first pillar was to make devices affordable for all, ensuring wider accessibility. The second pillar focused on expanding digital connectivity to every nook and cranny of the nation. The third pillar aimed to make data accessible to everyone, breaking down barriers to information. Finally, the fourth pillar emphasized a "Digital First" mindset, prioritizing digital solutions in all aspects of life.

He also shared about India's mobile manufacturing industry, as witnessed a remarkable transformation. From a mere five units in 2014, the country now boasts over 200 manufacturing facilities. This surge has drastically reduced reliance on imports, with India now producing six times more phones than it did previously. As a result, the nation has emerged as a significant global exporter of mobile devices.

Hon'ble Prime Minister highlighted the key factors driving this exponential growth in telecom sector has been the driving force to the unprecedented reforms and innovations. These efforts have led to a dramatic decline in internet data costs, making internet access more affordable for the average Indian. Today, data rates in India are among the lowest in the world, at approximately 12 cents per GB. This affordability has fueled a surge in data consumption, with Indians now consuming an average of 30 GB internet data per month.

The Prime Minister expressed deep concern about the growing challenges of cyber-security in today's interconnected world. Digital tools and applications surpasses the national borders, making it impossible for any single country to effectively protect its citizens from cyber threats. He emphasized the need for international collaboration and the establishment of a global framework governing cyber-security, similar to the regulations already in place for the aviation sector. The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) was urged to play a more active role in developing such a framework.

The Prime Minister called upon all WTSA members to prioritize the safety and security of telecommunications for everyone. He concluded his inaugural speech by extending his best wishes and support for the success of the WTSA's endeavors.

Inauguration of IMC-2024

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the 8th edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC-24) on 15th Oct, 2024 during the WTSA- 2024, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Event was jointly organized by DoT and COAI, from 15th to 18th Oct, 2024 and attracted large number of visitors. IMC-24 offered a valuable opportunity for stakeholders to come together, exchange ideas, and work towards a more inclusive, secure, and resilient global Internet.

In the keynote speech, Shri Akash Ambani, Chairman, Reliance-Jio commended Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his visionary leadership, catalysed India's remarkable digital transformation, a significant platform for innovation and collaboration, driving unprecedented growth in the digital sector.

In his address, Shri Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Airtel emphasized Prime Minister's vision for a Digital India. He said the real transformation began in 2014 with 'Digital India,' which ignited the 4G revolution. He highlighted the transformative impact of 4G technology, which has brought smartphones and digital services to millions, including those in rural areas. He underscored the government's initiatives to boost local manufacturing through the Production Linked Incentives (PLI) program, positioning India as a manufacturing hub for telecom equipment. Shri Mittal announced that India is set to lead in 5G technology, with extensive rollouts planned across urban and rural regions within the next 12 to 18 months. He also discussed the potential of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) networks, stating that these networks will bridge the connectivity gap in our most challenging terrains, ensuring all Indians have access to fast internet services.

Shri Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman, Aditya Birla Group, highlighted the steadfast support by the government in consistently recognizing the importance of digital connectivity and introducing several reforms over the years to drive India towards an even more connected, empowered and inclusive digital nation. He lauded the government's continued thrust on expanding digital infrastructure and accelerating digital adoption for people and businesses equally, recalling the Prime Minister's quote on MSME meaning maximum support to micro, small and medium enterprises.

Secretary General ITU, Ms. Doreen Bogdan Martin said that it is a great honor to be present at the joint ceremony with the Prime Minister on the occasion of WTSA-2024. She said that it is a powerful symbol of the deep ties between the ITU and India and recalled the meaningful conversation with the Prime Minister last year during the inauguration of ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre. She underlined that the world has a lot to learn from India's accomplishments with regard to unified payments interface.

IMC-24 proved a significant international event focused on Internet Governance that brings together diverse stakeholders from around the world. It served as a platform for governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and academia to discuss and address key issues related to the global Internet ecosystem.

Network of Women (NOW4WTSA24)

The Network of Women (NoW) event was dedicated to advancing women's roles in standardization, telecommunications/ICTs, and related fields. It aims was to recognize both women and men who have made exceptional contributions to advocating for women's participation and supporting their work in these areas.

In the ITU-T sector, NoW's mission was to make standardization and telecommunications/ICTs development more appealing to women. This involves providing opportunities for them to demonstrate their expertise, actively participate in the standardization process, engage in ongoing learning, share their knowledge with others, build meaningful connections, and advance their careers.

The Network of Women (NoW) event was a highlight of WTSA-24, held on October 17, 2024. Featuring engaging and inspiring talks by prominent female role models, networking opportunities, and a recognition ceremony, NoW provided a platform for women in the field.

NOW4WTSA24 encouraged ITU Member States to prioritize gender inclusivity in WTSA-24. This included nominating women for key ITU-T leadership positions, appointing women as Heads of Delegations, promoting the active participation of women in country delegations, and striving to achieve a 35% overall female representation at the event.

IAFI honoured the Head of Delegations of WTSA-24

On October 18, 2024, the IAFI hosted a prestigious Dinner Reception for the Heads of Delegations attending WTSA-24 at Hotel Le Méridien, Janpath, New Delhi. The event was attended by Telecom Ministers from five countries, their teams, protocol officers, the Director BR and TSB of the ITU, the Member (F) of DCC/DoT, numerous DoT/WPC officers, delegates from various countries, and many senior executives from several Indian companies.

The Dinner Reception provided an excellent opportunity for informal discussions and fostered goodwill among participants. It was a highly successful event that will contribute to the overall success of WTSA-24.

IAFI Stall at Hall-1 (exclusive Hall for WTSA-24)

IAFI provided a Stall in WTSA-24 Hall from 14th Oct, 2024 onward, opposite the DoT/WPC/TEC/C-DOT combined stall, to showcase IAFI role in various telecom activities, to increase awareness, generate interest, and to attract potential customers, as is allow to directly interact with companies executives, gathering information and to understand their needs and preferences.
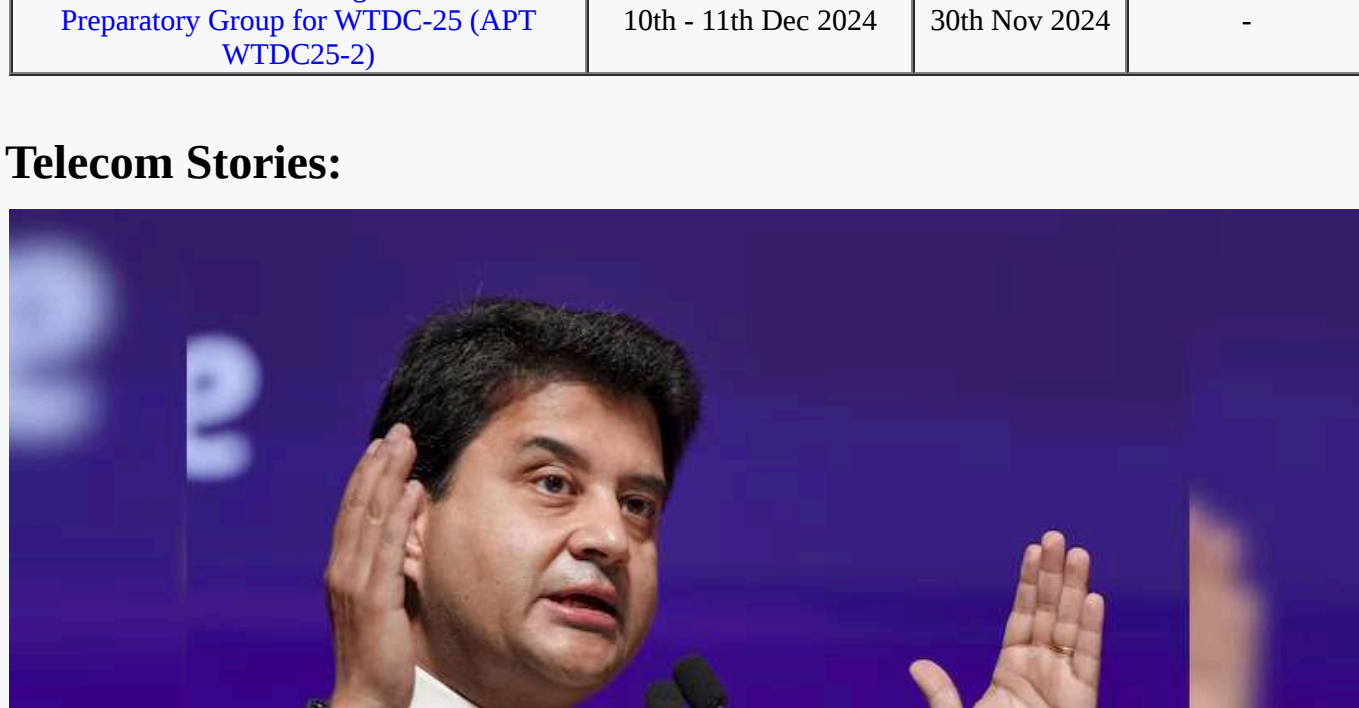
TRAI Consultation Papers

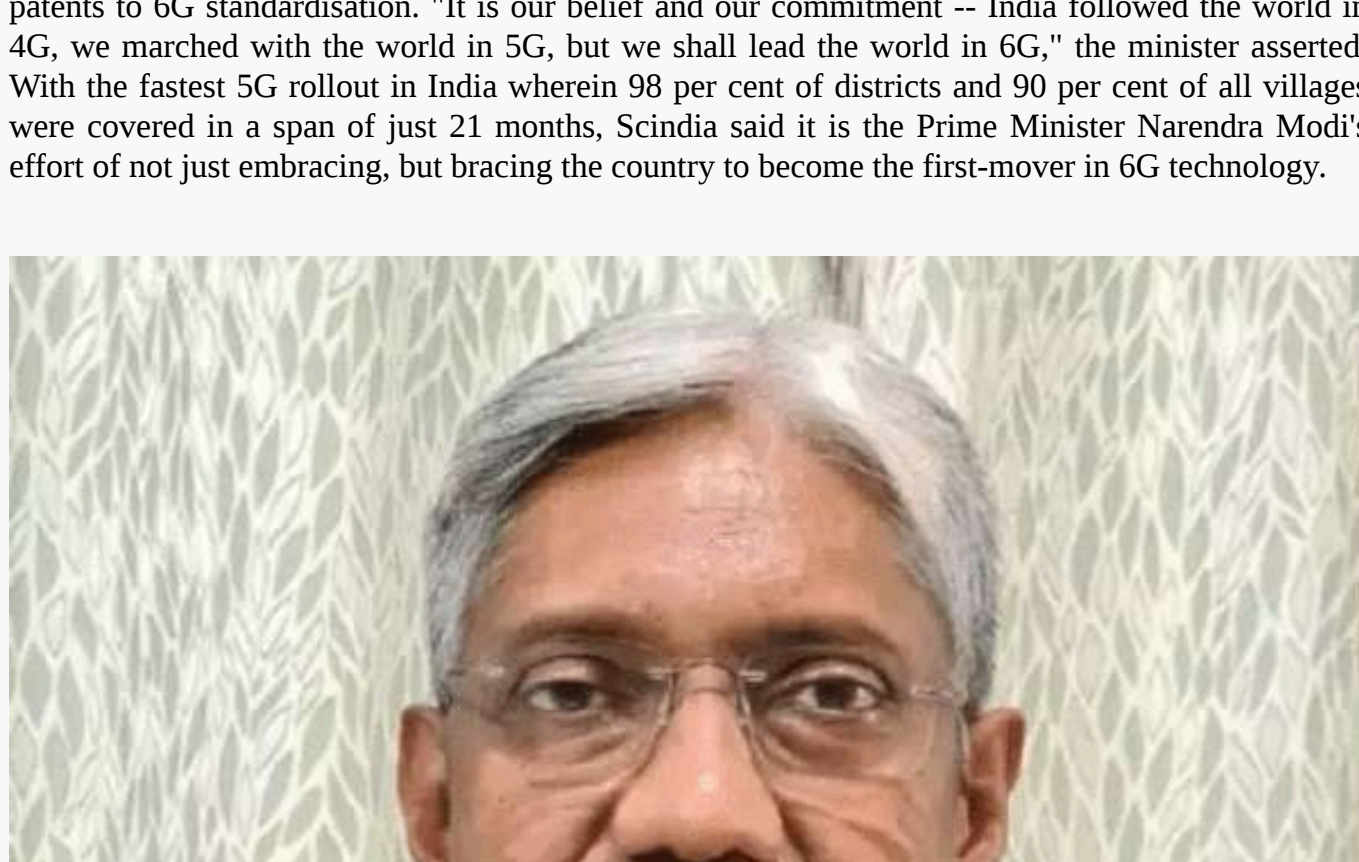| Consultation Papers	Submission Dates	Status	Submission
Terms and Conditions for the Assignment of Spectrum for Certain Satellite-Based Commercial Communication Services	25th Oct 2024	Under Development	-

Important Meeting that IAFI will attend

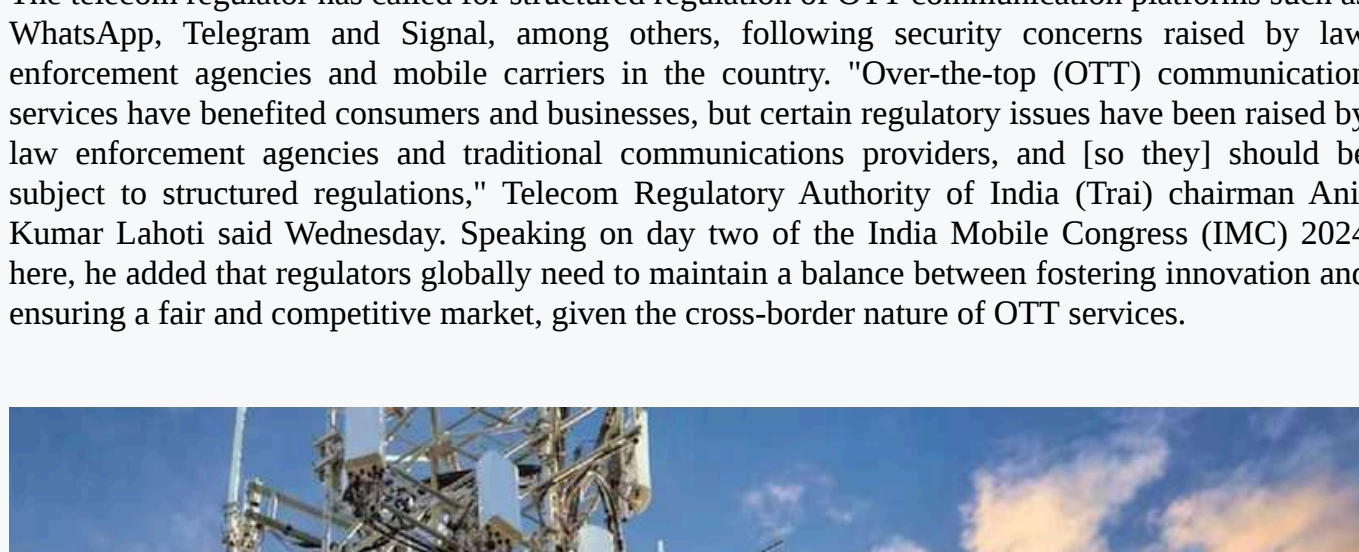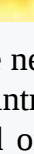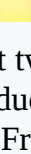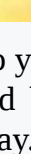| Meeting	Dates	Submission Dates	IAFI Preparatory Meetings
ITU-R: Working Party 4B (WP 4B)	16th Oct - 22nd Oct 2024	04th Oct 2024	-
ITU-R: Working Party 4A (WP 4A)	21st Oct - 31st Oct 2024	09th Oct 2024	-
ITU-R: Study Group 4 (SG 4)	01st Nov 2024	19th Oct 2024	-
ITU-R: Working Party 6C (WP 6C)	04th - 08th Nov 2024	23th Oct 2024	-
ITU-R: Working Party 5B (WP 5B)	05th - 08th Nov 2024	25th Oct 2024	-
ITU-R: Working Party 6A (WP 6A)	05th - 13th Nov 2024	23th Oct 2024	-
APT: 25th Meeting of South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC-25)	11th - 13th nov 2024	1st Nov 2024	-
APT: The 2nd Meeting of the APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-25 (APT WTDC25-2)	10th - 11th Dec 2024	30th Nov 2024	-

Telecom Stories:

India is resolved to lead the world in 6G, communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Tuesday, terming the telecom sector of the country as 'aggressive' and 'ambitious'. Scindia, speaking at the inauguration of India Mobile Congress and World Telecommunication Standardization (WTSA) 2024, said with the Bharat 6G Alliance, India hopes to contribute at least 10 per cent patents to 6G standardisation. "It is our belief and our commitment — India followed the world in 4G, we marched with the world in 5G, but we shall lead the world in 6G," the minister asserted. With the fastest 5G rollout in India wherein 98 per cent of districts and 90 per cent of all villages were covered in a span of just 21 months, Scindia said it is the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's effort of not just embracing, but bracing the country to become the first-mover in 6G technology.

The telecom regulator has called for structured regulation of OTT communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal, among others, following security concerns raised by law enforcement agencies and mobile carriers in the country. "Over-the-top (OTT) communication services have benefited consumers and businesses, but certain regulatory issues have been raised by law enforcement agencies and traditional communications providers, and [so they] should be subject to structured regulations," Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti said Wednesday. Speaking on day two of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2024 here, he added that regulators globally need to maintain a balance between fostering innovation and ensuring a fair and competitive market, given the cross-border nature of OTT services.

Telecom sector revenue may cross Rs 5 trillion in the next two years in line with the present growth trend fuelled by ease of doing business measures introduced by the government in the last 2-3 years, a senior Department of Telecom official said on Friday. The DoT's apex decision-making body Digital Communications Commission Member Manish Sinha mooted the idea of relooking at current practices of spectrum allocation and working on new methodologies like dynamic spectrum allocation, and for shorter duration to enhance spectrum usage efficiency and derive its economic value.