

Extend trusted source mandate to all devices in network: COAI

Currently, only TSPs have to abide by rules on installing foreign-made equipment

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The mandate of trusted source certification should be extended to all foreign-made devices logging onto the telecom ecosystem, and not only network equipment as is the current norm, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) said on Tuesday.

The COAI — which has all three private telecom service providers (TSPs), Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, as its members — has argued that bringing only certain devices network under the certification regime does not serve any purpose. It had written a letter to the Department of Telecommunications on the issue last year.

Since June 2021, TSPs have been mandatorily required to connect to their networks only those new devices that are designated as “trusted products” from “trusted sources”. The move is aimed at curbing strategic security risks emerging from Chinese telecom majors ZTE and Huawei.



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Also, the government’s Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecom Equipment (MTCTE) regime is set to come into effect on July 1.

Under this, all the pieces of telecom equipments have to be tested and approved at local laboratories before they can be installed as part of network rollouts.

Speaking with reporters on Tuesday, COAI Director General S P Kocchar said these regimes should be extended to all foreign-made devices, especially Internet of Things

(IoT), that are connected to a network. IoT devices are physical objects with sensors, processing ability, software, and other technologies that connect and exchange data with other devices, such as smart TVs, car keys, and wearable tech like smartwatches.

“If a sensor which is not security-cleared connects into any network, the network is only as strong as its weakest element. A TSP has to buy a network switch, which is cleared by trusted sources as well as MTCTE. But other players can buy the same

‘Allocation in 6 GHz without auction to cause ₹3 trillion loss’

Allocation of spectrum in 6 gigahertz band without auction would result in a potential loss of over ₹3 trillion to the national exchequer, telecom industry body COAI said on Wednesday.

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switch online and use it on a network,” Kocchar said.

A network switch connects devices in a network with each other, enabling them to talk by exchanging data packets. Giving out network equipment to people using unlicensed spectrum without checking is not a good idea, Kocchar stressed, referring to Wi-Fi devices.

The COAI’s argument may also cover Chinese handsets, which have also been scrutinised by the government on charges of being security risks.