

Government Takes Measures to Prevent Damage to Underground Utilities During Telecom Cable Laying

Union Minister Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia Highlights Safeguards Including the Call Before u Dig Mobile App and Right of Way Rules

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Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, **Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia**, informed the **Lok Sabha** in a written reply today that the Government has implemented several measures to prevent damage to drinking water pipelines and other underground utilities during the laying of telecommunications infrastructure.

As per information available on the **Call Before u Dig (CBuD) platform**, certain complaints have been raised by telecom operators regarding unreported excavations. However, no complaints have been lodged on the platform by the agency responsible for drinking water supply regarding any damage to drinking water pipelines (during the laying of telecom cables in the Ferozepur, Guru Har Sahai, Fazilka, Malout, Abohar and Sri Muktsar Sahib areas of Punjab).

The Union Minister highlighted that the Government has already taken several measures to prevent damage to drinking water pipelines and other underground utilities, including the following:

- i. The Telecommunication (Right of Way) Rules, 2024 (“**RoW Rules**”) have been made under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 to enable public entities to specify their terms and conditions at the time of grant of right of way permissions and to provide for safeguards for undertaking telecommunication infrastructure deployment works.
- ii. The Call Before u Dig (CBuD) mobile app has been made available to facilitate better coordination between excavation agencies and underground utility asset owners before any excavation and to prevent accidental damage to underground utility infrastructure such as optical fibre cables, drinking water pipelines, electric cables and gas pipelines etc. The Government has requested all States and Union territories (UTs) to mandate the use of the CBuD mobile app by various department and agencies, such as Public Works Department, urban local bodies and water, gas and electricity utilities, pursuant to which the Government of Punjab has issued a notification dated 7.2.2025 mandating such use by all departments within the State. In addition, the Central Government has also requested all State/UT Governments and infrastructure-related Ministries of the Central Government to issue necessary directions to map their underground utility assets on the **Prime Minister GatiShakti National Master Plan (PM GatiShakti)** platform, with a view to enhance the effectiveness and utility of the CBuD mobile app.

- iii. The aforesaid Act also provides for compensation in case of damage to telecommunications network established under the provisions of the Act and the RoW Rules provide the procedure for claiming compensation. Governments of all States and UTs have been advised by the Department of Telecommunications to issue a government order on lines similar to the RoW Rules to provide the procedure for claiming compensation for damage to underground utilities of departments and agencies in the State in case their assets are damaged due to excavation by any agency or contractor.

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