



Press release

COAI seeks urgent intervention from the Department of Telecommunication, Govt. of India to avoid network outages across Bihar

- ***COAI flags issue of diesel pilferage from towers in Bihar***
- ***COAI approached the Department of Telecommunication, Govt. of India to help prevent the malpractices of diesel pilferage from the towers by unscrupulous elements.***
- ***Approx. 1,200 telecom towers under threat that might lead to network outage across Bihar***

Bihar 29th March 2022: COAI, the leading representative body for the Indian telecommunications industry, today said it has approached the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) to help prevent the malpractices of diesel pilferage from the towers by unscrupulous elements.

Uninterrupted telecom connectivity is essential not only for continuity of business and economy but also for the education of children and management of health infrastructure, particularly in light of the present grim situation arising out of the surge of COVID-19 infections across India. To meet the National Broadband Mission (NBM) targets and realization of the Gati Shakti initiative, extensive laying of OFCs has commenced and is still underway by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs).

Lt. Gen. Dr SP Kochhar, Director General, COAI said “Being an essential service, telecommunication infrastructure and its services continue playing a significant role to keep individuals and organizations connected and running. During the pandemic, the industry is trying to expedite the roll-out of Telecom Infrastructure to ensure uninterrupted connectivity round the clock to support various critical services and maintain communication across the States. The telecom tower sector has a high dependence on diesel. Further, our members are facing a lot of issues regarding the malpractices of diesel pilferage from the towers by unscrupulous elements across Bihar. Our members have received threats from the Union Leaders for shutting down telecom sites of our members on 29th March 2022 which may impact approx. 1,200 leading to complete connectivity shut-down / major telecom service disruption across Bihar. Our members are committed to providing uninterrupted connectivity to the citizens of Bihar. However, the local Union and Diesel Mafia are threatening the industry to shut down the telecom Infrastructure which will lead to network outage across the state”.

The teams engaged in the maintenance of the communication sites are facing huge threats, obstructions and manhandling issues while carrying out the maintenance work. This is causing a sense of insecurity and discouragement in the field team personnel working on the ground to build a robust communication network for the larger benefit of the Public as well as the State Administration.

COAI has approached the Department of Telecommunication to engage the Chief Secretaries of Bihar & to issue appropriate directions to District Magistrate/District Authorities/Police to be vigilant and safeguard the Telecom/Digital infrastructure. DGP of Bihar to further Instruct officials to take strict legal action against the obstructers / unlawfully obstructing the existing Telecom/Digital Infrastructure. COAI has also requested to issue necessary directions to the DGP of Bihar so that the Landlord/City Union work should not shut down the site, impacting the overall network coverage.