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Draft Telecommunication Bill to reduce paperwork, says Ashwini Vaishnaw

It is part of the overhauling exercise being done by the department of telecommunications internally as it looks to simplify procedures and provide ease of doing business to the industry

Topics

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Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

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The Draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022, is based on Wireless Planning Coordination (WPC) reforms aimed at making the process of companies applying for permits more efficient and without physical interference, [Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw](#) said on Thursday.

Vaishnaw said the draft Bill would bring down the time for licensing to 28 days and usher in licensing reforms through an online process. "This will now reduce the paperwork and right of way (RoW) approval permission down to 6-7 days," he said at the 9th Annual Forum of Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) on Thursday.

The minister said the reforms were essential for businesses to plan their investments in the country. It is part of the overhauling exercise being done by the [department of telecommunications](#) internally as it looks to simplify procedures and provide ease of doing business to the industry.

Right of Way (RoW) is a pre-requisite for establishing telecommunication networks and improvement of telecommunication services. The existing regulatory framework, based on Right of Way Rules, 2016, has had a limited impact in addressing bottlenecks in rapid expansion of telecommunication infrastructure.

Effective mechanisms for obtaining RoW will be essential for rapid roll-out of newer technologies such as 5G, the government has said. The Draft Telecom Bill provides for a robust regulatory framework within the federal structure, to obtain RoW in a uniform, nondiscriminatory manner, for establishment of telecommunication infrastructure.

The Bill seeks to remove the limitations by providing an enabling framework that facilitates RoW for laying or building telecommunication infrastructure by any facility provider. In this case, "facility provider" includes any licensee or registered entity, including any contractor or sub-contractor or agent working for the central government or licensee or a registered entity.

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