

# U.P. unveils major reforms to boost digital connectivity

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Agra, Varanasi, and Noida are role models, while districts like Lucknow and Sonbhadra will receive additional resources



For representation only (HT File Photo)

The Uttar Pradesh government is implementing reforms to enhance digital connectivity across the state, making it a leader in the telecom sector, according to a government spokesperson.

In the second State Broadband Committee meeting, key measures were approved to improve internet and telecom services for citizens. From January 1, 2025, the state will adopt the Center's Right of Way Rules 2024. Departments must refund 90% of public property usage fees within 15 days of application, with rejections requiring reasons within seven days. Applications without a response in 15 days will be automatically approved. To expedite this, the state is upgrading its application portal.

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The government will utilise utility ducts under Smart City projects for telecom expansion, charging ₹6 per meter annually for Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). BharatNet and 4G saturation projects have been prioritised, with ₹300 crore allocated for improving digital access in villages. Efforts include upgrading power connections and ensuring mobile networks in underserved regions.

The state is modernising electricity meters with smart prepaid ones to curb theft and monitor consumption. Recognising telecom infrastructure as an industry, industrial electricity rates are proposed, similar to states like Maharashtra.

The "Call Before You Dig" (CBuD) app will prevent damage to telecom and essential infrastructure during excavations. Departments have been directed to use this platform for granting excavation permissions. Additionally, the Digital Communications Readiness Index (DCRI) will assess district-level telecom performance, promoting investment and service improvements.