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Soon, you can report dug-up patches on civic pothole tracking website

To plug one of the major causes for the bad roads in the city, the BMC is now working to extend the services of its pothole-tracking website www.voiceofcitizen.com to trenching works underway.

It is estimated that annually over 400 km of the city's road network is dug up for laying utility lines. According to the standing technical advisory committee for the civic roads department, trenching work carried out post-monsoon by over 28 external agencies is a major cause for road deterioration. Due to frequent digging, the sub-base of a newly laid road is destroyed leading to early appearance of potholes during monsoon.

"We are working on the portal to facilitate complaints regarding poor trenching work. Citizens will be able to upload photos of work where roads are dug up and not relaid properly. This will help us keep track of the contractors and the utility agencies that are required to fill up the patches roads properly," said Additional Municipal Commissioner SVR Srinivas.

He added that the new system will be rolled out within a month.

This year, contrary to its previous stand of holding utility agencies responsible for poor trenching work, the corporation took up the initiative to fill the dug-up patches. A Rs 82-crore tender for appointing contractors was floated in June. Companies participating in the tender process bid 35 to 45 per cent lower than the estimated cost. As a result of the poor response, the civic standing committee has delayed approving the proposal for over six months now.

"Once the proposal is cleared and the contractors are appointed, only then can we put this tracking system in motion. To ensure quality, we have raised the performance guarantee component of the contract to 20 per cent. It is urgent that we finalise the tender soon as the trenching work will pick up in the next two weeks," Srinivas said.

Standing committee chairman Rahul Shewale said the committee delayed approval as it sought clarifications on few aspects of the tender. "It was not clear that the tender applies to work for trenches dug by all agencies. We also asked the administration to recover some of the charges from the utility

agencies."

A complaint registered on the website will be relayed to the road engineer in charge of the stretch, who will then have to ensure the trench-filling work is carried out as per the standards"

"We are working on how the engineers and the contractors will be assessed for the work. Unlike the problem of potholes, whose responsibility solely lies with the BMC, the problem of badly filled trenches is external. There are different dynamics at work here. As per the contracts, we will levy charges on the utility service providers," Srinivas said.