

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.660  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2019**

**BLOCKING OF VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORKS BY ISPS**

660. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the reports on blocking of virtual private networks and other services by certain ISPs are true or not;
- (b) whether the same is a violation of the Net Neutrality license conditions issued by Department of Telecommunications and if so, the steps taken by Ministry to check this; and
- (c) whether it is a fact that a certain operator has claimed that Government has asked them to block the same, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &  
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS  
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)**

(a) to (c) Under the scope of license for Internet Service Provider (ISP) and in view of Telecom Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal ( TDSAT) judgment dated 03.05.2005 in petition no. 7 of 2005, ISP Licensees are not authorized to offer Virtual Private Networks (VPN) services to their subscribers.

Further, as per Information Technology Act, 2000 [Section 69A] and Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public Rules 2009 made thereunder, the directions for blocking for public access of any information including websites/ Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) / webpages is issued by Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY). As per the directions of MeitY, from 01<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to date, instructions for blocking of 2354 URLs/websites have been issued by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to ISPs.

Also, from 01<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to date, as per the direction of various Honorable Courts, instructions have been issued by DoT to ISPs for compliance of the court orders for blocking of about 8459 URLs / websites.

In addition, DoT has directed Internet Service Providers to block the cumulative list of 6631 URLs/websites related to online child sexual abuse material as provided by Central Bureau of Investigation.

The directions issued by MeitY / DoT for blocking of websites / URLs / webpages for public access are as per regulatory framework on net neutrality.

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