

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1823
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH AUGUST, 2023**

SUSPENSION OF TELECOM SERVICES

1823 PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has any record of suspension of telecom services imposed across various States in the last five years, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government has any plans to bring a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to review whether the suspension of telecom services followed the Supreme Court guidelines in Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India in this regard;
- (c) whether Government has undertaken assessment of losses incurred due to suspension of telecom services, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps being taken to minimize incidence of suspension of telecom services?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI DEVUSINH CHAUHAN)**

(a) As per seventh schedule of the Constitution, police and public order are State subjects. State Governments are empowered to issue orders for temporary suspension of internet service to maintain law and order in the State or part thereof under the provisions contained in the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. Permissions granted for internet shutdown to Delhi Police are available on MHA website.

(b) & (d) In light of judicial review of Temporary Suspension Rules, 2017 by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Anuradha Bhasin Vs UOI (WP No. 1031/2019) and Ghulam Nabi Azad Vs UOI and Anr (WP No. 1164/2019), the Temporary Suspension Rules, 2017 has been amended in consultation with stakeholders. It has been mandated that any order issued under these rules shall not be in operation for more than 15 days. Further, all Chief Secretaries/Administrators of States/UTs have been directed that all suspension orders be published to enable the affected persons to challenge it before the High Court or appropriate forum and the orders must adhere to the principle of proportionality. The Temporary Suspension Rules, 2017 has already passed the judicial scrutiny by the Apex Court, the department does not envisage any further review/amendment of the Suspension Rules.

(c) The contribution of internet for the well-being of citizens has to be balanced with stopping misuse by anti-social elements requiring temporary shutdowns as per rules based on the assessment by Local (State/UT Government) Authorities.
