

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2337
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.08.2026**

ADVERTISING FOR PROHIBITED LIQUOR AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

2337 SHRI HARIS BEERAN:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state;

- (a) whether Government is cognizant that surrogate advertising for prohibited liquor and tobacco products is bypassing the Cable Television Networks Act by shifting to placements within Over-The-Top (OTT) programming;
- (b) whether the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules and its 2026 amendments, mandate pre-certification or labelling of such embedded surrogate brands by OTT publishers; and
- (c) the exact enforcement actions, including financial penalties levied on OTT platforms since 2024 for embedding uncertified alcohol or pan masala brands within their original content?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING;
AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
(DR. L. MURUGAN)**

(a) to (c):

Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 on 25.02.2021 under IT Act, 2000 in order to put in place an institutional mechanism for publishers of news & current affairs on digital media and publishers of online curated content (OTT Platforms).

Part-III of the rules provides for a Code of Ethics for digital news publishers and publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms).

The Code of Ethics, inter-alia, requires OTT platforms not to transmit any content which is prohibited by law, exercise due caution and discretion, and undertake classification of content on the basis of i) Themes and messages; ii) Violence; iii) Nudity; iv) Sex; v) Language; vi) Drug and substance abuse; and (vii) Horror as described in the schedule to the Rules.

Part II of the Schedule to the IT Rules, 2021 prescribes guidelines for the classification of content, including content involving 'Psychotropic substances, liquor, smoking and tobacco and Imitable behaviour'.

Complaints relating to the violation of the Code of Ethics are addressed under the provisions of the three-tier grievance redressal mechanism and complaints received by the Ministry are forwarded to the concerned OTT platforms for resolution as per IT Rules, 2021.

The Government issued an advisory dated 26.11.2024 to publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms) on streaming content related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
