

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2351
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26TH DECEMBER, 2018**

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF TELECOM SERVICES

2351. SHRI A.P. JITHENDER REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Department of Telecom (DoT) has issued any advisory/circular/correspondence order/direction for execution, implementation or use of Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017 (Rules) to any department, Ministry or public official in any State/UT and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether DoT has held any meeting or discussion to review working of the said Rules and if so, the dates of the meeting, list of attendees, agenda and the minutes thereof;
- (c) whether there is any ongoing process by which DoT reviews operation of the Rules and disruption of internet access with particular reference to collecting data on number of directions/ orders made under the Rules and if not, the reasons therefor and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether DoT has received any complaints, representations and petitions on the Rules and if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the DoT in this regard?

ANSWER

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

- (a) In order to streamline the process of internet shutdowns in the Country, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) notified "Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017" on 07.08.2017. As per these rules, the directions for temporary suspension of telecom services, including that of internet services in an area, can either be issued by the Union Home Secretary in case of Central Government or the State Home Secretary in case of State Government, due to public emergency or in the interest of public safety. On 14.08.2017, DoT endorsed these rules to all Chief Secretaries of States/Administrators of Union Territories.
- (b) No such meeting has been held to review the working of the Rules.

(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has not issued any order for temporary suspension of internet services under the provisions of Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

Police and public order are State subjects as per the Constitution and States are responsible for prevention, detection and investigation of crimes through their law enforcement machinery. Concerned State Governments are empowered to issue orders for temporary suspension of internet services 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.

(d) DoT had received a joint representation dated 08.08.2018 from telecom service providers, wherein, it was intimated that frequent suspension of internet services were being ordered by various State Governments. Accordingly, on 28.09.2018, all State Governments have been advised to sensitize the concerned officials/agencies against precipitate actions leading to shut down of Internet services, and to ensure that the provisions of “Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017” are adhered to.
