

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4601  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023**

**SUSPENSION OF INTERNET SERVICES**

**4601. SHRI KESINENI SRINIVAS:  
SHRI PRADYUT BORDOLOI:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has a record of suspension of telecom services imposed across various States during the last five years and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has any plans to bring a standard operating procedure to review as to whether the suspension of telecom services followed the Supreme Court guidelines in Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken cognizance of the report published by Top10VPN that estimated the cost of suspension of telecom services in 2022 to the tune of \$172 million and if so, the details thereof along with the necessary steps taken by the Government to address the same; and
- (d) whether the suspension of telecom services goes against the Government schemes for Digital India and if so, the steps being taken by the Government to minimise the incidence of suspension of telecom services?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) Police and public order are State subjects as per seventh schedule of the Constitution and States are responsible and 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. Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed that records pertaining to internet shutdowns ordered by States are not centrally maintained by MHA. Further, the permissions granted for internet shutdown to Delhi Police have been made available on MHA website.
- (b) In light of the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgment dated 10.01.2020 in W.P.(C) no. 1031/2019 and 1164/2019, Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency & Public Safety) Rules, 2017 has been amended vide Gazette Notification dated 10.11.2020. The said amendment has been forwarded to all Chief Secretaries/Administrators of States/UTs emphasizing that Hon'ble Supreme Court has mandated the publication of suspension orders; and all orders for suspension of Telecom Services must adhere to the principle of proportionality and must not extend beyond the necessary duration.
- (c) No such authentic report is available with DoT.
- (d) The contribution of internet for the well-being of citizens has to be balanced with social media platforms being misused by anti-social elements requiring temporary internet shutdowns as per the rules based on the assessment by Local (State/UT Government) Authorities.

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