

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4131
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18TH MARCH, 2020**

SECURITY OF FREE AND PUBLIC WI-FI

†4131. SHRI RAVINDRA KUSHWAHA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken/proposes to take adequate steps to ensure data privacy of users and security of free and public Wi-Fi connections being provided at various places of the country i.e. Railway stations, Airport and other public places and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to make it mandatory to display information regarding safe internet browsing and user manual for the places providing free and public Wi-Fi; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

- (a) Yes, Government has taken adequate steps to ensure data privacy of users and the security of free and public Wi-Fi connections being provided at several locations of the country such as railway stations, airports and other public places. Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued instructions in February 2009 to licensed Telecom Service Providers regarding safeguards in provision of Wi-Fi Internet services in the delicensed frequency band for secure use of Wi-Fi services including those provided at public places i.e. Hotel, Restaurants, Airports, Malls, Shops and Railway Stations through Hotspot. Further, Best practices on Security in Public Wi-Fi Implementations has also been shared with Internet service Providers (ISPs).
- (b) and (c) As of now, there is no proposal in the Department to make it mandatory to display information at aforementioned locations regarding the safe internet browsing and usage practices for public Wi-Fi connections. However, Government has instructed Telecom Service Providers/Internet Service Providers under Unified License (Similar provisions in other Licences also) to protect the interest of the stakeholders/customers and privacy of the individual as indicated below:

“37.2 Subject to terms and conditions of the license, the Licensee shall take all necessary steps to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of any information about a third party and its business to whom it provides the Service and from whom it has

acquired such information by virtue of the Service provided and shall use its best endeavours to secure that:

- a) No person acting on behalf of the Licensee or the Licensee divulges or uses any such information except as may be necessary in the course of providing such Service to the Third Party; and
- b) No such person seeks such information other than is necessary for the purpose of providing Service to the Third Party.

Provided the above para shall not apply where:

- i) The information relates to a specific party and that party has consented in writing to such information being divulged or used, and such information is divulged or used in accordance with the terms of that consent; or
- ii) The information is already open to the public and otherwise known.

37.3 The Licensee shall take necessary steps to ensure that the Licensee and any person(s) acting on its behalf observe confidentiality of customer information.

39.4 The LICENSEE shall ensure protection of privacy of communication and ensure that unauthorized interception of messages does not take place”.
