

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3518
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 17.03.2021

REGULATION OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES

**3518. SHRI P.P. CHAUDHARY:
SHRI ARJUN LAL MEENA:
SHRI KAUSHAL KISHORE:
SHRIMATI APARAJITA SARANGI:**

Will the Minister of Electronics & Information Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is contemplating to regulate digital platforms of tech giants such as Facebook, Twitter etc. and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has taken cognizance of the unrelenting debate on the relationship between these tech platforms and news publishers and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to lay down any policy with regard to these digital platforms in view of the aforesaid debates and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any talk was held between the Indian Prime Minister and the Australian Prime Minister with regard to regulation of these digital platforms in the backdrop of the Australian law on regulating relations between news media and digital platform and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether Indian copyright Act has provisions governing the freshly evolving relationship between tech platforms and news publishers and if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI
SANJAY DHOTRE)

(a) to (c) : Digital platforms for user generated content are intermediaries as defined in the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000. However, off late some of the digital media platforms like Google, Facebook etc. have also started news services/channels. In order to provide accountability of such platforms, Government has released the new Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under the Act. These Rules require that such entities, which primarily enable the transmission of news and current affairs content, shall follow certain due diligence and the Code of Ethics as prescribed.

The IT Act also places various obligations to body corporate including social media platforms as per the provisions of section 43A, 72A and 69A.

(d) : Australian Prime Minister spoke to the Prime Minister over phone on 18 February 2021. Among other topics, PM Morrison also shared Australia's experience with legislating "News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code" during the call.

(e): Section 65A(1) and 65B of Indian Copyright Act, have specific provisions of protection of technological measures and protection of rights management information.
