

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3570  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2021**

**TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF TELECOM SERVICES**

3570. SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of formation of review committees under rule 2(5) of the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017 across the country, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has conducted any review/inspection to see if the review committees met within 5 working days of a suspension order to examine its validity, as required under rule 2(6) of the abovementioned rules and if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any review/inspection to see if the review committees subsequently met every 7 days to examine whether the continuation of the suspension is still warranted, as directed by the Supreme Court in the Anuradha Bhasin judgement and if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has taken note of the fact that the country has registered the world's highest number of internet shutdowns and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) whether the Government agrees with the general consensus among the citizens that a suspension of internet is an attack on free speech and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Department of Telecommunications (DoT) notified "Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017 on 07.08.2017 under the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 under which, the directions to suspend the telecom services, including internet in an area, can either be issued by the Union Home Secretary or Home Secretary of State Government concerned as the case maybe, to maintain law and order in the State or part thereof under the provisions contained in the said rules. Such orders are forwarded to the review committee as per provisions in said rules. Records relating to formation of review committee(s) of States/UTs are not maintained by DoT.

- (b) The proceedings of review committee(s) of States/UTs are not reviewed by DoT.
- (c) 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.
- (d) No such authentic information is available with DoT.
- (e) In the present digital era, internet has become one of the important mediums for education, financial transactions, business, information, etc. and its contribution to the economic well-being of the society is substantial, but the fact cannot be denied that the social media platforms operating on internet are also being used by terrorists/anti-social elements to disseminate hate and violence thus disturbing the social harmony.

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