

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2699  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2021**

**REGULATION OF INTERNET SHUTDOWNS**

2699. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any data on the number of internet shut downs imposed in the country during each of the last three years and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Jammu and Kashmir faced a prolonged internet shutdown in 2019 and 2020 and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has any data on how the number of internet shutdown compares internationally and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government is aware that internet shut down incurs economic costs and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (e) whether the Government has any evaluation mechanism to assess economic losses caused by internet shutdowns; and
- (f) whether the Government has taken any steps to restrict the practice of internet shutdown and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

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/UTs 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 view of the Constitutional changes and bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union territory of Ladakh, in national

interest and also in the interest of security of J&K, temporary restrictions on various communication channels like internet and mobile services were resorted to in Jammu and Kashmir.

Subsequently, the matter was reviewed from time to time and restrictions imposed were gradually eased out in a phased manner and 4G internet data services were restored in the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir w.e.f. 05.02.2021.

(c) No such authentic information is available with DoT.

(d) & (e) Department of Telecommunications has no mechanism to assess socio-economic impact of internet shutdown. 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 shutdowns as per rules based on the assessment by Local (State/UT Government) Authorities.

(f) 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.

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