

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1403
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31ST JULY, 2024**

INTERNET SHUTDOWNS

1403 DR. SHASHI THAROOR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government maintains official data on internet shutdowns in India;
- (b) if so, the details of internet shutdowns, State-wise;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government is aware of the 2024 Access Now report evidencing that India has recorded the highest number of internet shutdowns for the sixth consecutive year;
- (e) whether the claims in the report are correct; and
- (f) whether the Government has a policy in place to reduce the need for internet shutdowns in the constitutional interest of prioritizing individual liberties?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) to (c) & (f) On the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety, the Central Government or State Governments are empowered to issue orders for temporary suspension of internet service as per the provisions contained in the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

Hon'ble Supreme Court has mandated the publication of suspension orders in public domain; and all orders for suspension of Telecom Services must adhere to the principle of proportionality and must not extend beyond the necessary duration. The said directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court have been communicated to all Chief Secretaries/ Administrators of States/ Union Territories (UTs) on 10.11.2020. As per seventh schedule of the Constitution, police and public order are State subjects. Accordingly, the details regarding internet suspension orders issued by State Government/ Union Territories (UTs) are not maintained centrally by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). However, permissions granted by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for temporary suspension of telecom services are available on MHA website.

The contribution of internet for the well-being of citizens has to be balanced with stopping misuse by anti-social elements requiring temporary shutdowns as per the rules based on the assessment by Local (State/UT Government) Authorities.

(d) & (e) No such authentic report is available with DoT.
