

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1579**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.12.2024

**ONLINE GAMBLING**

**1579. SHRI SHREYAS M PATEL:**

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of incidents where individuals have committed suicide due to financial losses in online gambling or harassment by companies operating in this sector;
- (b) if so, the details of such cases recorded during the last year including the total number of suicides linked to online gambling and illegal betting, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any action against companies involved in online gambling or illegal betting and if so, the number and nature of notices issued or penalties imposed;
- (d) whether the Government considers the prevalent gambling apps as a game of chance or a game of choice and the rationale behind this classification; and
- (e) whether the Government plans to introduce legislation to regulate or prohibit online gambling to prevent harm to citizens and if so, the details of such proposed legislation?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (e): The Government is cognizant of the risks posed by online gambling and potential harms like addiction, financial loss and harassment. The policies of the Central Government are aimed at ensuring a safe, trusted and accountable Internet for its users.

With regard to regulations on online gambling, it is informed that “Betting and gambling” is a State subject as per the Seventh Schedule in the Constitution of India. Therefore, State Legislatures have exclusive power to legislate on matters related to betting and gambling.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (“BNS”) defines “Organised crime” which includes economic offences, cyber-crimes, by any person or a group of persons, either as a member of an organised crime syndicate or on behalf of such syndicate. Additionally, the BNS defines “Petty organised crime” which includes committing any act of unauthorised betting or gambling. Any person committing such petty organised crime shall be punished with minimum 1 year of imprisonment that may extend to 7 years and also liable to fine.

The Designated Officer at Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (“MeitY”) is empowered under the Information Technology Act, 2000 (“IT Act”) to issue blocking orders to intermediaries for blocking access to specific information/ link (including the betting or gambling sites) in the interest of sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for inciting cognizable offence relating to above. MeitY follows due process as envisaged in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information for Public) Rules, 2009. MeitY has issued 692 blocking directions related to online betting/gambling/gaming websites (including mobile applications) under the IT Act between the year 2022- 24.

To address various socio-economic concerns of online harms, criminalities and threats to national security, MeitY after extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules,

2021 (“IT Rules, 2021”) in exercise of the powers given under the IT Act. The IT Rules, 2021 cast specific due diligence obligations on intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, with respect to the information that is not to be hosted, displayed, uploaded, published, transmitted, stored or shared on the platforms. Intermediaries are required not to host, store or publish any information violative of any law for the time being in force. Intermediaries are required to ensure their accountability that includes their expeditious action towards removal of the unlawful information categorised under the IT Rules, 2021 or on the basis of grievances received against any information that, among other things, is harmful to child or that is relating or encouraging money laundering or gambling.

In addition, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (“MIB”) has issued an advisory dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 relating to online gaming, fantasy sports etc. to all private satellite television channels to adhere to the guidelines issued by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) and ensure not to promote any activity which is prohibited by statute of Law. Further, MIB has issued advisories dated 13.06.2022, 03.10.2022, 06.04.2023, 25.08.2023 and 21.04.2024 to print, electronic, digital media, Endorsers and Influencers, Social Media Intermediaries and online advertisement Intermediaries to refrain from publishing advertisements of online betting platforms which are misleading, and do not appear to be in conformity with the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, Advertisement Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995 and advertisement norms under the Norms of Journalistic Conduct laid down by the Press Council of India.

Further, MHA has established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (“I4C”) to provide a framework and eco-system for Law Enforcement Agencies (“LEAs”) to deal with cybercrimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. MHA has also launched the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>) to enable the public to report all types of cybercrimes. Cybercrime incidents reported on this portal are routed to the respective State/UT law enforcement agency for further handling as per the provisions of law. The portal has distinct mechanisms for registering complaints against women/child related crimes and financial frauds. A toll-free Helpline number ‘1930’ has been operationalised to get assistance in lodging online cyber complaints.

\*\*\*\*\*

