EXPANSION OF DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

2066. SMT. PRATIMA MONDAL:

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

(a) whether the Government has ensured that expansion of digital public infrastructure does not lead to exclusion, surveillance risks or data misuse particularly for vulnerable populations;
(b) the concrete progress made under India's semiconductor mission in terms of operational fabs, timelines and indigenous capacity in light of global supply-chain realignments; and
(c) the manner in which the Government reconcile frequent internet shutdowns with India's global digital economy ambitions and constitutional freedoms?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): In line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to democratise use of technology, the Government of India has promoted Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) across India. Under the Digital India programme, the Government has adopted the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) approach to enable delivery of digital services at population scale through open, interoperable and scalable platforms.

Government has successfully implemented foundational digital public infrastructure (DPI) at population scale for identity (Aadhaar), for payment (UPI), for data exchange (DigiLocker and API Setu), etc. DPI has been a transformative force in India's socio-economic development, significantly enhancing financial inclusion, digital inclusion, governance and economic growth.

To prevent digital exclusion, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) initiatives incorporate multilingual interfaces through the National Language Translation Mission (NLTM) – BHASHINI, accessibility features for persons with disabilities, and assisted service delivery through Common Service Centres (CSCs) and other facilitation channels, ensuring last-mile service delivery to rural and vulnerable populations.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the expansion of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) remains inclusive, secure, and respectful of citizens' privacy and rights, including vulnerable populations. The following legal and policy safeguards are in place:

- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) provides a comprehensive legal framework for processing digital personal data in a manner that recognises the rights of individuals to protect their personal data while enabling lawful use of such data.
- The DPDP Act provides additional protections for children and persons with disabilities, including the requirement of verifiable consent from parents or lawful guardians.
- The Aadhaar framework is governed by the Aadhaar Act, 2016 and related regulations impose strict controls on storage, access, and sharing of identity data.

The semiconductor development strategy is inspired by Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India, Make for the world. As part of this strategy, India aims to develop a complete ecosystem, ranging from design, fabrication, assembly, testing, packaging and module manufacturing.

Given the foundational nature of semiconductor industry for the economy, the Government has launched the 'Semicon India Programme' with a total outlay of Rs. 76,000 crore for the development of semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem in the country. Following are the salient achievements/progress under this Programme:

- Government has approved 10 projects with envisaged investments of about Rs. 1.6 Lakh Crore which includes 2 fabs and 8 packaging units. These units inter-alia include Complementary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor **(**CMOS) (Silicon) fab, Silicon Carbide fab, advanced packaging, memory packaging, etc. These projects are in various stages of implementation and pilot production has started in 4 units.
- 24 chip design projects have been supported through startups. 16 have completed tape outs and 13 have received Venture Capital funding.
- 350 universities have been provided access to Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools, used by 65,000 engineers.

Budget 2026-27 has announced Semicon 2.0 program.

As per the Telecommunications (Temporary Suspension of Services) Rules, 2024 notified under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, the competent authority must first explore all reasonable alternatives to address the public emergency and public safety concerns before issuing an order for the temporary suspension of internet services. If such a suspension is deemed necessary, then the suspension order must be published clearly stating the reason and be limited to defined geographical area and specified duration.

Generally, during the temporary suspension of telecommunication services in a region, only internet services are suspended and other telecommunication services like voice calling and Short Message Service (SMS) remain available through which people in that region can communicate and access emergency services.

These safeguards ensure that the need to maintain public order and safety is balanced with India's global digital economy ambitions and the protection of constitutional freedoms.

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