

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 562
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.07.2026

ADVERTISEMENTS LINKED TO CSAM

562. SHRI MANISH TEWARI:
SHRI MANICKAM TAGORE B:
SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR:
SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken cognizance of reports alleging the dissemination of advertisements linked to Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) on social media platforms in the country and if so, the details thereof along with the action taken thereon;
- (b) whether the existing legal and regulatory framework prescribes specific obligations for intermediaries to detect, prevent and remove advertisements promoting illegal or harmful content and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing regulatory framework governing online advertising and content moderation systems of social media platforms in light of such incidents including AI-based detection of harmful content and if so, the findings thereof;
- (d) whether such advertisements were able to bypass platform safeguards despite “zero tolerance” policies claimed by social media platforms and if so, the reasons for regulatory failure;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to strengthen the regulatory framework for online advertising to prevent the dissemination and monetisation of illegal and harmful content including CSAM and if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the Government has coordinated with law enforcement agencies to identify networks linked to such advertisements and associated criminal activities and if so, details thereof;
- (g) whether the links to external platforms such as Telegram used for distribution of illegal content are being effectively monitored and blocked; and
- (h) whether the Government has assessed risks posed to children and vulnerable users due to such content appearing through targeted advertisements and if so, the findings thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (h): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring an open, safe, trusted, and accountable internet for its users, including women and children. The Information Technology Act, and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code)

Rules, 2021, together, have put in place a stringent framework to deal with unlawful and harmful content in the digital space.

CSAM material on social media:

Government of India has taken serious note of the reports alleging the dissemination of advertisements linked to child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on social media platforms and sought a detailed report from the concerned intermediary. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (“NCPCR”) has also issued notice to concerned social media platforms.

Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 (“IT Act”)

The IT Act provides punishment for various cyber offences such as identity theft (section 66C), impersonation (section 66D), privacy violations (section 66E), publishing or transmitting obscene or sexually explicit content (sections 67, 67A, 67B). It also empowers Police to investigate offences (Section 78 and 80).

IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“IT Rules”)

The IT Rules cast specific obligations on intermediaries to observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform the users of computer resources not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful to children, obscene, pornographic, invasive of another’s privacy, insulting or harassing on the basis of gender or violates any law for the time being in force.

The intermediary, within two hours from the receipt of a complaint made by an individual or any person on behalf, in relation to any content which involves full / partial nudity, exposing the private area and artificially morphed images of an individual should take all reasonable and practicable measures to remove or disable access to such content which is hosted, stored, published or transmitted by it.

Recent amendments to IT Rules:

Recent amendments to IT Rules require social media platforms and other intermediaries to remove unlawful content within three hours of the receipt of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or reasoned intimation by the Appropriate Government or its agency.

Intermediaries, in cases where the violation involves the commission of an offence under any law currently in force—such as the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 read with the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, or the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, which mandates reporting must report such offence to the appropriate authority in accordance with the provisions of the applicable law.

Countering harms caused by AI generated content:

Government has further strengthened the regulatory framework by amending the IT Rules, 2021 to address harms arising from synthetically generated information (SGI), including deepfakes and AI-generated content.

Key points related to the amendment are as follows:-

- Intermediaries are required to ensure clear labelling and traceable metadata for permissible AI-generated content, so that users can easily identify synthetically generated material and prevent deception or misuse.

- It further strengthens user accountability and platform due diligence, including mandatory user awareness regarding legal consequences of unlawful AI-generated content and stronger compliance obligations for social media intermediaries.
- Importantly, the guidelines explicitly cover child sexual exploitation material, non-consensual intimate imagery, impersonation and other harmful AI-generated content, requiring platforms to prevent such content and take prompt action when detected.
- Strengthening of timelines for compliance, including reduced timelines for removal of unlawful information upon actual knowledge upon valid reasoned intimation from the Appropriate Government or court orders (timeline reduced from 36 hours to 3 hours) and for grievance redressal (including special categories such as nudity/impersonation etc.) (timeline reduced from 72 hours to 36 hours and 24 hours to 2 hours for sensitive matters, respectively).
- Intermediaries are obligated to deploy reasonable and appropriate technical measures, including automated tools or other suitable mechanisms, to not allow any user to create, generate, modify, alter, publish, transmit, share, or disseminate, as the case may be, any synthetically generated information that violates any law for the time being in force.

IT Rules mandates the Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs) to take reasonable efforts to deploy appropriate technical measures, including automated tools or other suitable mechanisms, to proactively identify information that depicts any act or simulation in any form depicting rape, child sexual abuse or conduct, whether explicit or implicit, or any information which is exactly identical in content to information that has previously been removed.

A significant social media intermediary providing services primarily in the nature of messaging should enable the identification of the first originator of the information on its computer resource for the purposes of prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of an offence related to the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, or public order, or of incitement to an offence relating to the above or in relation with rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material, punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than five years.

In case of failure of the intermediaries to observe the legal obligations as provided in the IT Rules, they lose their exemption from third party information provided under section 79 of the IT Act. They are liable for consequential action or prosecution as provided under any extant law.

Advisories and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP):

Government has issued multiple advisories to the intermediaries, including the Social Media Intermediaries, emphasizing the observance of due diligence obligations under the IT Act and IT Rules. The details of the advisories issued and SOPs formulated are as follows:

- Vide Advisory dated 29.12.2025, government reiterated to the intermediaries regarding observance of statutory due diligence obligations under the IT Act and IT Rules, for preventing hosting, publication, transmission, sharing or uploading of vulgar, indecent, obscene, pornographic and other unlawful content on their platforms. It also advised the intermediaries to undertake an immediate review of their internal compliance frameworks, content moderation practices and user enforcement mechanisms, and to ensure strict and continuous adherence to the provisions of the IT Act and the IT Rules.

- An advisory dated 16.03.2026 was issued to intermediaries with respect to the generation, hosting, publication, transmission, sharing or uploading of abusive, defamatory, objectionable, derogatory and misleading synthetically generated information.
- A Standard Operating Procedure (“SoP”) to curtail dissemination of Non-Consensual Intimate Imagery (NCII) content on online platforms has been formulated and released on 11.11.2025. The SoP provides detailed guidance for victims, intermediaries and law enforcement agencies to ensure prompt and uniform action against the online dissemination of NCII content including intimate or morphed images shared without consent.
