

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (c) Advice dated 12.09.2018 of CVC was received. The CVC has advised that based on the facts and circumstances of the case, the Commission allows the matter relating to procurement of STM Cards from CISCO and award of AMC by BSNL to rest.

(d) to (f) Question does not arise in view of response (a) to (c) above.

National Digital Communications Policy

2641. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) by when the draft National Digital Communications Policy would be finalised and put in force;

(b) whether the interests of consumers and unfair competition between service providers would be taken care of in the new telecom policy;

(c) whether internet telephony system for in-flight connectivity would be allowed in airlines, for passengers to communicate; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) The National Digital Communications Policy 2018 was notified in the Gazette of India on the 22nd October, 2018.

(b) The Policy has been formulated after consultation with various stakeholders including the telecom service providers. The Policy recognizes the importance of continued improvement in the regulatory framework for attracting investments and ensuring fair competition, to serve the needs of Indian citizens.

(c) and (d) Government has allowed both voice and internet services on aircraft in Indian airspace, by notifying the "Flight and Maritime Connectivity Rules, 2018" in the Gazette of India on 14th December, 2018.

Temporary suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017

2642. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:

SHRI PARTAP SINGH BAJWA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise data of internet shutdowns issued under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017;

(b) whether the Ministry conducted any public or stakeholder consultations prior to the finalising and publication of these Rules;

(c) if so, the details thereof, including comments and suggestions received by the Ministry and action taken therein;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether these Rules are different from earlier rules or laws under which internet services could be suspended, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) to (e) Central Government has not issued any order of internet shutdown under the provisions of Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

Police and public order are State subjects as per the Constitution and States are responsible for prevention, detection and investigation of crimes through their law enforcement machinery. Concerned State Governments are empowered to issue orders for temporary suspension of internet services 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. Records related to internet shutdowns ordered by State Governments are not maintained by DoT.

In order to streamline the process of internet shutdowns in the country, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) notified "Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017" on 07.08.2017. As per these rules, the directions for temporary suspension of telecom services, including that of internet services in an area, can either be issued by the Union Home Secretary in case of Central Government or the State Home Secretary in case of State Government, due to public emergency or in the interest of public safety. These directions are then reviewed by the Review Committee constituted in the Central or State Government under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary or Chief Secretary, as the case may be, within five working days of issue of such directions.

Before finalizing these rules, inter-Ministerial consultations were held with Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Finance and NITI Aayog. However, no public consultation was held.