

Internet shutdowns

511. SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) how many times have internet shutdowns been initiated by Government in the last five years, year-wise and State-wise data thereof;

(b) what are the rules and procedures for initiating an internet shutdown, the details thereof; and

(c) under which circumstance can an internet shutdown be initiated by Government and for how long, whether the necessity for continuing the shutdown is monitored, if so, at what intervals and by whom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) to (c) 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.

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) granted permission to Delhi Police for temporary shutdown of telecom services in certain parts of Delhi on 19th and 20th December, 2019, under the provisions of Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. However, it was exercised only on 19th December, 2019.

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 either DoT or MHA.

The initiation and subsequent withdrawal of an order for the internet shutdown is issued by the Central Government or the concerned State Government taking into consideration the public emergency or public safety. All such orders are being reviewed

by the Review Committee as envisaged in the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017 within 5 working days of issuance of such orders.

Promotion of 'Make-in-India' programme in telecom sector

512. SHRI DHARMAPURI SRINIVAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the representatives of the telecom industry have recently urged Government for the facilitation of funding at low rates of interest, removal of GST on the licence fee, spectrum usage charges, refund of the accumulated input tax credit for promotion of 'Make-in-India' programme in the telecom sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has any plan of extending the same facilitation in the other industries also, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the stand of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) and (b) Telecom Service Providers have urged the Government for removal of GST on License Fee & Spectrum Usage Charges and also for refund of accumulated input tax credit. As the issue pertains to Ministry of Finance, the Department of Telecom has already requested the Ministry of Finance to examine the representations of Telecom Service Providers suitably.

(c) and (d) Does not pertain to Department of Telecom.

Towers installed in Kalburgai and Ballari, Karnataka

513. SHRI SYED NASIR HUSSAIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of villages including in Karnataka where towers have been installed till now and the State-wise number of towers to be installed in the next financial year, State/UT-wise;

(b) the total number of towers installed in Kalburgai and Ballari districts of Karnataka during each of the last three years, telecom company-wise; and