

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOKSABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.5611
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 06.04.2022

ONLINE BLOCKING

5611. SHRI VELUSAMY P.

Will the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) has issued any orders to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) directing them to block access to URLs, Facebook pages and YouTube Videos;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received any complaint regarding illegal domains posting as Government websites;
- (d) if so, the details of the action taken by the Government;
- (e) whether the ISPs have necessary technology to block specific items or contents instead of blocking the entire website and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether the Government is coordinating with various other Ministries and ISPs to streamline the procedures for online blocking and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a) and (b): In line with the objective of the Government to ensure an Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable Internet for all its users, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issues directions for blocking for access of information by public under provision of section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 and the Rules therein, namely, the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information for Public) Rules, 2009. MeitY issue directions to Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to direct the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block access of website/domains. DoT, being licensors to ISPs, directs them to block website/domain when it receives directions for blocking from MeitY or a competent court order. For social media platforms, directions for blocking of access to URLs are issued to respective intermediaries. Accordingly, MeitY issues directions directly to Facebook and YouTube to block access to Facebook pages and YouTube Videos respectively.

Based on the requests received from various nodal officers, MeitY has blocked 3635, 9849 and 6096 URLs during the year 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively.

(c) and (d): Yes, Sir. It is observed that some websites pretending to be Government websites are hosted for conducting fraudulent activities like recruitment scams. Upon noticing such incidents, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) coordinates incident response measures with affected entities, service providers, respective sector regulators as well as law enforcement agencies.

(e): No Sir. ISPs cannot block specific items or contents or specific webpage of a website which uses https protocol. In the https protocol, the data packets are transmitted using encrypted form.

(f): The procedure for blocking of URLs under section 69A of the IT Act is published as the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009. Further, the procedure for removal of unlawful online content is defined in section 79 of the IT Act and the Rules therein namely, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
