

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION 410**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2022

**ROLE OF TEK FOG APP IN SPREADING MISINFORMATION**

**410. SHRI SYED NASIR HUSSAIN: SHRI SHAKTISINH GOHIL:  
SMT. PHULO DEVI NETAM:**

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

- (a) whether Government has or intends to investigate the role of Tek Fog App in spreading misinformation during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests, Delhi communal violence and COVID-19 pandemic in India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Ministry tracks and monitors apps designed to manipulate social media platforms with the intent to spread hate speech and misinformation;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) whether Government has or intends to investigate the Tek Fog App which has been used to hijack Twitter's trending section and to harass journalists online?

**ANSWER**

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

(a), (b) and (e): The Government has noted the news articles about the alleged App, namely, 'Tek Fog' that has been used to manipulate social media platforms. This Ministry has tried to locate the App on prominent App Stores and APK Stores and could not find the App in any of these online stores. This Ministry is not aware of any technical vulnerability that makes social media intermediaries susceptible to manipulation as reported in the news articles.

(c) and (d): Government is committed to Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable Internet for users. Government is aware of the risk and danger posed by growing phenomena of dissemination of wrong and hateful information through some social media platform. This Ministry does not track and monitor Apps or content appearing on social media platforms.

Government has taken several steps to address the challenges of user harms and hateful information available on social media intermediaries/ platform. These, *inter alia*, include:

- (i) In order to ensure accountability of social media platforms to users and enhanced user safety, Government, on 25.02.2021, has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000. These Rules require that the intermediaries follow certain due diligence as prescribed. They are required to inform their users not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, objectionable, and unlawful in any way. They are also required to remove any unlawful content relating to Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India or violative of any law, as and when brought to their knowledge either through a court order or through a notice by appropriate government or its agency.

(ii) Section 79 of the IT Act provides that intermediaries are required to disable/remove unlawful content relatable to Article 19(2) of the Constitution or violative of any law for the time being in force, either through a court order or on being notified by appropriate government or its authorized agency. Further, the Law Enforcement Agencies of States and Centre, as appropriate, take legal action against the cyber-crime offenders as per the provisions of applicable laws.

(iii) Section 69A of the IT Act empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above.

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