

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1091

ANSWERED ON:01.03.2011

REGULATION ON ILLEGAL CHANNELS

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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether various security agencies have expressed grave concern over the illegal/unauthorized broadcast of foreign channels such as Press TV, Q-TV etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of cases of illegal broadcast of foreign channels reported and the action taken thereon during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government proposes to amend the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 so as to regulate/ check such illegal/ unauthorized channels;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which such amendment is likely to be brought forward?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C. M. JATUA)

(a) to (e) Yes Sir. Intelligence Bureau, vide its letter dated 7.9.2009, had informed the Ministry that there are as many as 26 illegal/unregistered channels, including Peace TV and Q-TV, being re-transmitted by cable operators in various parts of the country. The Ministry of I&B has taken various measures within the ambit of the extant law to stop the carriage of these illegal channels. To this end, the Ministry had issued an advisory to all authorized Multi-System Operators and Cable Operator Associations on 7.10.2009 to discontinue carriage of such unregistered channels with immediate effect. The Ministry had also in its communication dated 27.1.2010 to Chief Secretaries drawn the attention of the State/UT Governments to the problem of illegal channels and requested them to issue necessary directions to the DM/SDM and Commissioners of Police to keep a close vigil. The States have also been requested to ensure strict and effective action against the erring Cable Operators. With a view to facilitate the Authorized Officers in enforcing the Act, particularly in curbing illegal channels, the Ministry of I&B has formulated a detailed guideline for setting up of State and District level Monitoring Committees to monitor the content transmitted by the cable operators. The Ministry has been constantly requesting the State Governments to expedite setting up of these Committees. The issue of illegal carriage of foreign owned TV channels by cable operators was also taken up by a Committee of Secretaries (CoS) which, has, inter-alia, suggested incorporating certain amendments in the Cable Act to address the problem. These amendments include making transmission of illegal channels a cognizable offence and enhancing existing financial penalties in the Act to discourage cable operators from transmitting illegal channels. The Ministry is in the process of seeking Cabinet approval on the proposed amendments and introduction of a Bill in the Parliament. No specific time frame can be given.