

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) to (c) Government is working on various strategies for using alternate sources of energy including solar energy viable for provision of mobile services in rural and remote areas of the country.

Quality of imported mobile phones

330. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has announced any quality standard for various mobile phones imported and marketed in the country;

(b) if so, whether such quality standard has been followed and checked by the Bureau of Indian Standards; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) to (c) The Government has adopted the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines in telecom sector which includes mobile phones also. According to which, Mobile handsets should comply with basic restriction in terms of SAR [Specific Adsorption Rate] value limited to 2W/kg (average over 10 g of tissue) localized for head and trunk in the frequency range of 10 MHZ to 10 GHZ. The instruction has been issued for compliance of SAR value in respect of indigenous handsets to manufactures in India. For prohibiting import of mobile handsets not compliant with SAR value, matter has been taken up with Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Government has prohibited the following:

- (i) Import of 'Mobile Handsets' without International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) No. or with all Zeroes IMEI.
- (ii) Import of CDMA 'Mobile Phones' without Electronic Serial Number (ESN)/Mobile Equipment Identifier (MEID) or with all Zeroes as ESN/MEID.

Handsets without IMEI number

331. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are 25 million subscribers who had handsets without IMEI and Government allowed a private agency to implant the number through software for a limited period of time;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the 15 digit IMEI number identified a mobile and it prevents the use of stolen handset for making calls and allow security agencies to track down a specific user; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to instruct the operators to strictly comply with the instruction on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) Sir, there were subscribers who had mobile handsets without IMEI. However, the exact number of such subscribers could not be ascertained as mobile handset is used by subscribers as per their choice and convenience. The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) in conjunction with GSM Association (GSMA), the global body for issuing IMEI numbers and its Indian Decentralized Administrators Mobile Standard Alliance India (MSAI) developed a software for the implant of Genuine IMEI numbers obtained from GSMA on the handsets without IMEI or zero IMEI. On the request of COAI, the Service Providers were allowed to get the Genuine IMEI implant carried out through authorized service centres following strict security features/safety guards mentioned in the Genuine IMEI implant program and approved by government. The detailed instructions in this regard were issued on 27.04.2009 and the Genuine IMEI implant was allowed to be completed by 30th June 2009 which was later extended to 30th November 2009 on 3rd September 2009.

(b) Sir, the IMEI, a unique number (15 digits identifies every GSM and Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) mobile phone. To check IMEI, operators need to have Equipment Identity Register (EIR). A mobile network can prevent the use of stolen handsets to make calls if provisioned as blacklisted in its EIR. Security agencies can provision target mobile handset on the basis of IMEI to intercept a specific handset.

(c) Government has issued directions to the Service Providers that call from mobile handsets with any IMEI number which is not available in the latest updated IMEI database of GSMA alongwith without IMEI or all zeroes IMEI are not processed and rejected with effect from 24 Hrs. of 30th November 2009. Further, TRAI has issued consultation paper on Issues Relating to blocking of IMEI for lost/stolen mobile handsets on 2.11.2010.