

Telephone tapping

1468. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of citizens whose telephones have been tapped by the authorities during the last three years and average duration/period during which they have been tapped;

(b) the nature of allegations or suspected crimes for which tapping was authorized and number of FIRs prosecutions launched exclusively on the basis of tapping;

(c) the designations of officials of Government who have been authorized tapping and service providers who were ordered to tap telephones; and

(d) the measures in place so that the authorized period is not exceeded and that tapped matter does not go in public domain?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) On an average, between 7,500 to 9,000 orders for interception of telephones are issued by the Central Government per month. Normally, the duration period does not exceed six months.

(b) Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 permits the interception in the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety. It would not be possible to indicate the number of FIRs launched exclusively on the basis of tapping as field investigations are also necessary to collect substantive evidence.

(c) Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs has been authorized for interception of telephones at the Central Government level. Home Secretaries of the State Governments are authorized for Interception of telephones at State level. The names of service providers are *inter-alia* as follows: (i) Aircell Cellular Ltd. (ii) Aircel Ltd. (iii) Bharat Sanchar Ltd. (iv) Bharti Airtel Limited (v) Idea Cellular Ltd. (vi) Loop Mobile (India) Ltd. (vii) Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. (viii) Reliance Telecom Ltd. (ix) S. Tel Private Ltd. (x) Sistema Shyam Teleservices Ltd. (xi) Spice Communications Ltd. (xii) Tata Teleservices Ltd. (xiii) Unitech Wireless Pvt. Ltd. (xiv) Videocon Telecommunications Ltd. (xv) Vodafone Essar Cellular Ltd.

(d) The competent authority also reviews orders to ensure that the authorized period is not exceeded. There is also an Oversight Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary to monitor the activity related to lawful interception.

Instructions are there to the agencies to ensure that the intercepted material is kept in safe custody.

Foreigners involved in illegal activities

1469. SHRI KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state: