

Unlawful phone tapping by telecom operators

824. SHRI AAYANUR MANJUNATHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of private telecom operators providing telecom services in the country, circle-wise;
- (b) whether these companies are allowed to tap telephone conversations without Government's permission;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the action taken by Government to prevent unlawful phone tapping by telecom operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) The Circle-wise list of telecom operators providing telecom services in the country is given in Annexure [See Appendix 227 Annexure No. 8].

(b) to (d) Phone tapping is governed by provisions of the section 5(2) of Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the guidelines in this regard are prescribed under Rules 419A of Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2007. No telecom service provider is permitted to intercept/tape the phone without government permission. Illegal tapping of a phone is a punishable act under section 26 of Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 with imprisonment for a term which may extend up-to three years, or with fine, or with both.

Low cost base stations

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

- (a) whether Reliance Industries Limited is working on ultra low cost base stations, used to transmit signals for telecom services costing just rupees one lakh each;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether these low cost towers are part of the strategy of country's largest private sector enterprise as it gears up for its foray into Infotel Broadband; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) to (d) M/s Reliance industries Limited is having a license only for provision of Captive Closed User Group (CUG) Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) Service. However, no such information regarding ultra low cost base station is available.

Further, Telecom Services Licensees are to comply with the terms and conditions of the Licence Agreement and have to follow the directions/regulations/orders issued from time to time by the licensor/TRAI.

Misuse of social media, internet and SMSs

826. SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether instances of misuse/abuse of Twitter, Facebook, internet sites and SMSs they come to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether there is a need to devise strategies to counter the propaganda that is carried out by these new means; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) and (b) Instances of misuse/abuse of twitter, facebook, internet sites and SMSs have come to the notice of the Government from time to time.

Recently, Government noticed circulation of provocative clips and photographs on social networking sites and through SMS and MMS, containing morphed images and videos in targeting people of North-East and inciting violence among communities in the country. Several incidents of availability of inflammatory, harmful and hateful contents on the social networking sites hosted outside the country were brought to the notice of Government. In addition, circulation of provocative clips and videos of the movie 'Innocence of Muslim' on Internet particularly on www.youtube.com was also noticed.