

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 969
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH FEBRUARY, 2025**

DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS IN TELECOM OPERATIONS

969 DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) the data protection measures mandated for telecom operators to safeguard consumer information;
- (b) the detailed layout of the several instances of data breaches reported in the telecom sector over the last three years;
- (c) the measures being taken and the penalties imposed on operators for non-compliance with the data protection regulations; and
- (d) the plans to strengthen data privacy frameworks in light of emerging technologies and increasing data consumption?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DR. PEMMASANI CHANDRA SEKHAR)**

(a) Following data protection measures have been mandated for telecom operators to safeguard consumer information :-

- 1) Telecom Operators are mandated, through the license, to take all necessary steps to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of consumer information.
- 2) The Telecommunications Act 2023 also provides for the measures to protect and ensure cyber security of telecommunication networks and telecommunication services. Accordingly, Telecom Cyber Security Rules 2024 have been notified to strengthen the safety of consumer information.
- 3) Department of Telecommunications has set up a Telecom Security Operation Centre (TSOC), for detecting potential cyber-threats to Indian telecom network and providing alerts to stakeholders for necessary action.
- 4) The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (“DPDP Act”) have been enacted which obligates organizations involved in digital personal data processing, including telecom operators, to implement measures to protect consumer information, including obtaining consent for specified purposes before lawful processing of digital personal data.

(b) & (c) For the FY 2023-2024, two incidents have been reported and for FY 2024-2025, five incidents have been reported. These reports on instances of data breaches could not be verified or validated. Hence, no penalty have been imposed on telecom operators. Details of reported instances of data breaches are attached as **Annexure-I**.

(d) The Digital Personal Data Protection Act and the rules, presently under public consultation, aim to further strengthen and safeguard rights of citizens regarding protection of their personal data in light of the emerging technologies and increasing data consumption.

**Annexure to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 969 to be answered on 13.02.2025.
Reported Instances of Data Breaches:**

Date of reporting	Brief
23.12.2023	Reports indicated that threat actor "perell" has shared a post regarding probable data leak pertaining to "BSNL".
23.01.2024	CERT-In reported that a threat actor named CyboDevil posted a promotion on an underground forum, offering a comprehensive Indian Mobile Network Consumer Database for sale.
20.05.2024	CERT-In has reported that a threat actor alias "Kiberphant0m" has gained unauthorized root super-access to the servers under BSNL control and is advertising access to these servers on an underground forum.
05.07.2024	On X platform @digitaldutta posted that Airtel data is on sale and has been hacked by Chinese threat actors.
06.07.2024	NCIIPC reported that VPN (Virtual Private Network) access to the network of TRAI is being sold on an exploits forum.
09.07.2024	NCIIPC reported that Personally Identifiable Information i.e. PII data of Tata Tele subscribers are on sale at darknet.
19.07.2024	NCIIPC, based on inputs from credible sources, reported that more than two TeraByte (TB) data of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) have been stolen by threat actors.
