

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1754
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2011
PHONE TAPPING GADGETS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has identified individuals and companies who have imported phone-tapping gadgets;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the use of `off-the-air` phone tapping gadgets poses severe threats to the national security;and
- (d) if so, the action taken in this regard so far?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA)

(a) to (d) The Licensed Telecom Services Providers are required to provide the facilities for lawful interception and monitoring as per the license terms and conditions. Hence, all the licensed Telecom Service Providers have procured the interception equipment and created the facility to intercept in their network.

Illegally imported 'Off the Air' phone tapping gadgets, if used for unlawful interception, can impinge on national security and privacy of citizens. Central agencies had brought out the fact that the equipment used for 'Off-the-air' GSM Monitoring is a dual use item which is also needed/used in usual telecom operations by Telecom Service Providers and Security agencies. For controlling the misuse of 'Off-the -air' equipments by individuals and entities, and to ensure proper verification of equipment, Government has taken following action:

- i. Such equipment has been put under restricted list vide Department of Commerce notification No. 53/2009-2014 dated 15-07-2010.
- ii. A press release was given on 31.12.2010 and public notice on 22.03.2011 was published, directing the person/s and companies who have/had imported procured or possesses the equipment capable of monitoring/ intercepting and surveillance of communications to provide the details of such equipment in the prescribed format to respective Telecom Enforcement, Resources and Monitoring Cells of Department of Telecommunications. In response, no individual person or companies have reported such equipment.