

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1585
ANSWERED ON:06.03.2013
USE OF IMPORTED SIMS
Deo Shri Kalikesh Narayan Singh

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of SIM cards in use in the country as on date;
- (b) the percentage of SIM cards that are being imported along with the name of exporting countries;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that the imported SIM cards have the potential to be a major threat to national security as these might have been produced with malicious embedded software;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the complaints or information received regarding embedded software in SIM cards;
- (e) whether the Government has taken any measures to discourage imports and encourage indigenous production of SIMs; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

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

(a) The number of SIM cards in use in country can not be precisely indicated, because many times SIM cards are issued repeatedly against same number. However, according to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the total number of wireless subscriber base as on December 2012 is 86,47,20,186.

(b) According to estimate by Smart Card Forum of India, 60% of total annual requirement of SIM cards is met through import. The import and export of SIM cards during last 3 years and upto December 2012 are as under (in Million Nos.).

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 (upto December 2012)
Import	221	557	715	567
Export	71	82	255	229

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) The details of imported SIM cards indicating country of import during last 3 years and in the current year is annexed.

(c) & (d) Potentially, vulnerabilities can exist in modern age telecom equipment, including SIM cards, due to embedded spyware/malwares, which can have implications on national security. Such potential threats exist in the network, irrespective of the source of manufacturing. However, no specific complaints or information has been received regarding embedded software in SIM cards.

(e) & (f) As per Foreign Trade Policy 2009-2014, import of SIM card is free. However, to promote manufacturing of SIM Cards within the country following actions have been taken:

i) An Expert Committee on Development of SIM Card Operating System and leveraging Mobile device for enabling secure transactional services has been constituted.

ii) With a view to increasing share of domestically manufactured electronic products which includes telecom equipment also, the Government vide Notification No. 8(78)/2010-IPHW dated 10th February 2012 laid down the policy for providing preference to domestically manufactured electronic products in procurement due to security considerations and in Government procurement. In order to extend preferential market access to domestically manufactured telecom products on security considerations, Department of Telecommunications is having stakeholders' consultations. The "SIM Cards' operating system and personalization activities" is also one of the items in the list of security sensitive telecom products for 100% preferential market access to domestic manufacturers.