

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1603
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2013
FREE VOICECALL AND MESSAGING
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some unlicensed service providers including google and skype are providing voice call, instant messaging, video conferencing services etc. through internet which is causing huge revenue loss to the Government and a threat to national security;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the names of such service providers and the action taken against them;
- (c) whether chat applications which are accessible on laptops, mobile tablets, etc, are under any monitoring system similar to other access services;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the security regulations applicable to these applications;
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government to regulate such activities to prevent abuse of these services and also measures taken to support domestic service providers against such activities?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) Licenses for provision of Telecom Services are issued to Indian companies under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. Unrestricted Internet telephony Services are permitted under the scope of Unified Access Service (UAS) in terms of the UAS Guidelines dated 14th December 2005. Similar provisions are there in Cellular Mobile Telephone Service(CMTS) and Basic Service Licence. Restricted Internet telephony Services [without connectivity to Public Switch Telephone Network(PSTN) / Public Land Mobile Network (PLMN) in India] are permitted under the scope of Internet Service Licence in terms of Internet Service guidelines dated 1st April 2002 and 24th August 2007.

Further, services like voice call, chat, messaging, video conferencing etc. offered by certain foreign websites including Google, Skype etc. are available in public domain for free use and may be accessible to users through Internet services provided by Licensed Telecom Operators. Applicable charges for Internet services are accordingly levied.

Telecom service providers are to provide the facility of interception of communication passing through their network as per the terms and conditions of their respective Licence Agreement and as per the terms and conditions of Indian Telegraph Act 1885 read with Rule 419 (a) of Indian Telegraph Amendment Rules, 2007.

In an endeavor to curb illegal telecom services, 34 Telecom Enforcement, Resource and Monitoring (TERM) units have been created in the country by the Government. Continuous efforts are made for curbing the illegal telecom operations through the TERM units. Also, Other Service Providers(OSPs) have been directed to have Internet connectivity from the authorised Internet Service Providers.

Further, Information Technology Act 2000 has been amended by the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 w.e.f. 27.10.2009 wherein enabling provisions have been made with reference to services being provided using computer resources including provisions for interception, monitoring and blocking for public access of any information through any computer resource.