GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:418
ANSWERED ON:22.04.2015
IMPORT OF TELECOM EQUIPMENTS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any guidelines on import of telecom equipment in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government was unable to set up Telecom Testing and Security Certification Centres to test the imported electronic/telecom items as proposed earlier and instead has put in place recognized/ accredited laboratories to do the assigned job; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the steps taken to set up specific laboratories for the purpose?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.418 FOR 22ND APRIL' 2015 ON IMPORT OF TELECOM EQUIPMENTS.

(a) & (b) : Madam, the licensed Telecom Service providers are free to purchase telecom equipments for building their network from vendors of various countries based on their techno-commercial considerations subject to complying with various license terms and conditions including security related terms & conditions.

Further, with regard to mobile phones, Government has issued the notification vide No.107/(RE-2013)/2009-2014 dated 16th January, 2015 issued that 'GSM mobile handsets' (classified under ITC (HS) code '8517') without International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) Number, with all zeroes IMEI, duplicate IMEI or fake IMEI & 'CDMA mobile handsets' without electronic serial number (ESN)/Mobile Equipment Identifier (MEID), with all zeroes as ESN/MEID, duplicate ESN/ MEID or fake ESN/ MEID is 'Prohibited'. With regard to import of multichannel GSM/ CDMA receivers, transmitters and trans-receivers, it has been notified that Multichannel GSM/ CDMA receivers, transmitters and trans-receivers capable of receiving or transmitting or both in two or more frequencies simultaneously, shall be "Restricted" for imports.

(c) & (d) In order to address the security concerns of the nation related to telecom and telecom networks, the Government has issued the amendment to various telecom licenses (i.e. Access Services, National Long Distance and International Long distance Services licenses on 31.05.2011 and Internet Service Providers & VSAT service providers on 03.06.2011) in consultation with Ministry of Home affairs and telecom Industry, wherein it is inter-alia mandated that Licensee shall induct only those network elements into his network, which have been got tested as per relevant contemporary Indian or International Security standards by any International Agency/Laboratory of the respective standards. Subsequently these security guidelines have been included as an integral part of Unified License (UL).

A pilot lab has already been established at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru to develop security standards, test processes and test tools for telecom equipment testing and security certification. It was envisaged to upscale this lab to full-fledged lab. However, the developments of systems, processes, security standards, test procedures, test tools, etc., for telecom network elements which are large in numbers, is time taking exercise. Also understanding security standards, protocols, etc., is a complex and voluminous task. Further, there are no readily available standards and processes for security testing of telecom equipment as the issue of establishing security standards for telecom equipment has been realized only recently by international standard making bodies like 3GPP.

The Government has decided to set up Telecom Testing and Security Certification Centre to develop systems, processes, adopt/develop security standards, test tools, etc., for telecom equipment security testing and certification. Based on these standards, processes and tools, the Centre can accredit the test labs for security testing and certification of telecom equipment used by various Telecom service Providers. Such test labs can be set up /established under private or public or joint venture entity.