

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

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 497  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020**

**TELECOM EQUIPMENT OF CHINA USED BY DOMESTIC TELECOM  
OPERATORS**

**497 Shri K.C. Ramamurthy:**

Will the Minister of **Communications** be pleased to state:

- (a) in what manner, the Ministry will ensure safety from ‘back door’ or ‘trap door’ vulnerabilities, particularly from China, in telecom networks;
- (b) percentage of Chinese telecom equipment being used by various telecom operators in the country, including public sector, company-wise;
- (c) whether Ministry has proposed any network audit by all telecom companies; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND  
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

(a) Sir, Government is aware that in modern age, the telecom equipments and networks used for provisioning of telecom services are prone to spyware/malwares including the backdoor & trapdoor vulnerabilities. A comprehensive security guideline in the form of license Amendments have been issued to Telecom Service Providers on 31.05.2011 in Access Service Licenses and on 3rd June’ 2011 for other licenses in consultation with MHA and after due deliberations with Industry. These amendments were subsequently incorporated as a separate chapter on Security Conditions in Unified License.

Vide these License conditions, it is mandated that Telecom Service Providers are responsible for the security of their network. It is also mandated that only those network elements shall be inducted into their Telecom Network, which have been tested as per relevant contemporary Indian or International Security Standards.

Further, it has also been mandated under license term & conditions that only the resident Indian citizen shall be the Chief Officer in charge of technical network operations, Chief Security Officer/Chief Information Security Officer, System Administrator and in-charge of Telecom Network & Switches.

The Government has brought out Indian Telegraph (amendment) Rules (Gazette notification dated 5th Sep 2017), which mandates prior mandatory testing and certification in respect of parameters as determined by the telegraph authority from time to time. Security testing framework is under the overall framework of Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecom Equipment (MTCTE), entrusted to Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC).

The National Centre for Communication Security (NCCS) has been established and entrusted with the responsibility to develop Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirements (ITSARs) for telecom equipment for testing and certification to ensure security in digital communication.

(b) The Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) procure and deploy telecom equipment from vendors based on their techno-commercial interests provided they adhere to the security provisions given in the license. Hence, no such data is maintained by Department of Telecommunications (DoT). However, the information received from TSPs in this regard is submitted below:

- (i) Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (RJIL), as a telecom service provider has not deployed any telecom equipment from ZTE and Huawei in its network, for providing various telecom services under its Unified License.
- (ii) Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL), follows a multi-vendor strategy for procuring equipment for different requirements in its network and has always been compliant to the various security related requirements placed upon it by the DoT notifications.
- (iii) Bharti Airtel Limited (BAL), uses telecom equipment of several vendors partners including Indian, American, European, Chinese across the different network domains- radio, core and transport and follow a multi-vendor approach for its networks to build robust and secure networks.
- (iv) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), has 44.4 % of its mobile network equipment from M/s ZTE and 9.0 % from M/s Huawei.
- (v) Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), has 10 % of its mobile network equipment from Chinese equipment manufacturers.

(c) Yes, Department has proposed network audit by all Telecom companies.

(d) As per condition no 39.6 of Chapter VI of Unified License, each licensee have to undertake an audit of their networks or get their networks audited from security point of view once in a financial year from a network audit and certification agency.

Further, the Department of Telecommunications on 06.12.2019 has directed the Telecom Service Providers i.e. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited, Bharti Airtel Limited & Vodafone Idea Limited to carry out Special Security Audit of their network by an external agency.

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