GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 62
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18th JULY, 2018

CLONING OF SIM CARDS

62. DR. UDIT RAJ:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether the Government has taken note of the instances of Chinese companies manufactured mobile chips cloning mobile SIM cards and stealing customers data and information in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(b)   whether such incidents pose a serious threat to the country and if so, the details thereof; and

(c)   the remedial action taken by Government to check this threat and ban the use of Chinese mobile chips?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) & (b): No such specific case of cloning of mobile SIM cards thereby stealing customers data and information has come to the notice of the Department.

(c):   As per the License conditions, the Telecom Service Providers are free to procure telecom equipment from any country based on techno-commercial considerations. As per Foreign Trade Policy, SIM cards can be imported freely into the country. There are security features implemented on both, the SIM itself and in Telecom Service Provider's (TSP) network which do not allow the cloning, though there are some applications which claim to copy the contents of the SIM in case of physical access to the SIM card. However this copying of contents of a SIM card does not result in cloning of SIM as various technical measures for identification and authentication of the SIM have been implemented in telecom networks to protect SIM card which include:-

(i) Implementation of authentication Key (Ki) and ciphering Key (Kc) in a secure memory area of SIM.

(ii) Implementation of crypto-algorithms on SIM with a self-destruct feature in case of brute force method being attempted, exceeding a set value, for detection of Authentication Key, Generation Key and Encryption Key.

(iii) Implementation of a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which is user configurable and PIN Unblocking Key (PUK), which is provided by the Telecom Service Provider only. Wrong PIN attempts beyond a set value (three) leads to SIM block, which can be unblocked only by entering PUK. A wrong attempt of PUK beyond a set value makes the SIM card permanently disabled.

******