

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 727**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 07.02.2024

**BAN ON FOREIGN MOBILE APPLICATIONS**

**727. SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL:**

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

- (a) whether many of the foreign mobile applications pose the national security as well as the privacy threat to the citizens of India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) the total number of foreign mobile applications banned in the country during the last three years; year-wise and
- (d) the types of privacy threat posed by these foreign mobile applications to Indian citizens?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
(SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR)

(a): The policies of the Government are aimed at ensuring that the Internet in India is Open, Safe & Trusted and Accountable to all our Digital Nagriks. The Internet technology and Internet used to be seen as force for good, but in recent years, technology is also exploited for causing user harms and criminality. The number of Internet users in India are expected to increase from 85 crores today to 120 crore users by 2026 making India the largest connected democracy on the global Internet. The Government is fully committed to exploit the good of the technologies but is cognizant of the harms, risks and the growing rate of criminalities that include spreading of prohibited information in the nature of misinformation, patently false information and deepfakes. The Government intends to ensure the Internet in general and information on it is safe & trusted and takes suitable steps on an on-going basis to tackle the bad actors.

(b) and (c): Yes. Government policies are aimed at curbing the illegal foreign mobile applications which pose a threat to the national security as well as to privacy of the citizens of India. Ministry of Home Affairs has identified certain mobile applications being operated in India and sent to Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) requesting for blocking those under section 69A of Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 which enables Government to issue directions for blocking for access of information if it is necessary or expedient to do so in the interest of sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for inciting cognizable offence relating to above. MeitY after following the due process as provided in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information for Public) Rules, 2009 has issued directions for blocking 27, 67 and 233 applications in the year 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively.

(d): As per agencies reports, apart from indulging in various fraudulent activities such as illegal financial activities, transferring money through hawala to outside countries, applications are also used for stealing and transmitting user data and real-time activity, surreptitiously to servers located outside India. Usage of these Apps by a large number of people in India enables compilation of huge data that can be collated, analyzed, profiled and mined by elements who are hostile to the sovereignty and integrity of India and for activities detrimental to national security, defense of India. Also, the activities carried out by most of these applications have the potential to disturb the public order.

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