Ministry of Communications

Department of Telecommunications Cautions Citizens against IMEI Tampering and Misuse of Telecommunication Identifiers

IMEI Tampering and Telecom Identifier Misuse May Attract Up to Three Years' Imprisonment and ₹50 Lakh Fine

Citizens advised to use the Sanchar Saathi Portal and Mobile App to verify and secure their mobile connections and handsets

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With the rapid expansion of mobile connectivity and digital services across India, the misuse of telecommunication identifiers, including the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of mobile devices, has emerged as a matter of serious concern. Such misuse can compromise the safety of citizens and pose risks to the security and integrity of telecommunication networks. The Government of India has put in place stringent legal provisions to prevent tampering with and misuse of unique telecommunication identifiers.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) reiterates that tampering with IMEI numbers or using devices with unauthorised or tampered telecommunication identifiers is a punishable offence under the **Telecommunications Act, 2023** and the rules framed thereunder.

Key Legal Provisions

- The **Telecommunications Act, 2023** provides for stringent action against tampering with telecommunication identifiers, including the IMEI number of mobile handsets and other telecommunication devices.
- **Section 42(3)(c)** prohibits tampering with telecommunication identifiers. **Section 42(3)(e)** prohibits obtaining Subscriber Identity Modules (SIMs) or telecommunication identifiers through fraud, cheating or impersonation.
- Violations may attract imprisonment for up to **three years**, a fine of up to **₹50 lakh**, or both. Such offences are **cognizable and non-bailable** under **Section 42(7)** of the Act. Under **Section 42(6)**, persons who abet or promote the commission of such offences are also liable to the same punishment.

What Citizens Should Avoid

DoT advises citizens to refrain from:

- Using, procuring or assembling devices such as modems, modules, SIM Boxes or other equipment with configurable or tampered IMEIs;
- Procuring SIM cards through fake documents, fraud, cheating or impersonation;
- Transferring, selling or handing over SIM cards obtained in their name to others who may misuse them; and
- Using mobile applications, websites or any other means to modify Calling Line Identity (CLI) or other telecommunication identifiers.

Citizens should also note that procuring SIM cards in their own name and subsequently loaning, renting or muling of SIM for misuse in cyber fraud or any other unlawful activity may result in legal liability for the original subscriber.

Using devices with tampered IMEI numbers, obtaining SIM cards through fraudulent means, or transferring SIM cards to persons who misuse them can have serious legal consequences..

Verification and Reporting through Sanchar Saathi

Citizens are encouraged to remain vigilant and make use of the digital tools available through the **Sanchar Saathi** initiative to verify and secure their mobile handsets.

The IMEI details of a mobile handset can be verified through the Sanchar Saathi platform. The service enables citizens to check details such as the brand name, model name and manufacturer information associated with the device.

The Government has put in place robust measures to prevent the misuse of telecommunication resources and strengthen the safety and security of India's telecommunications ecosystem. Citizens can access various services available under the Sanchar Saathi initiative to verify and protect their mobile connections and devices.

Compliance with the provisions of the **Telecommunications Act, 2023** and the rules framed thereunder is essential for preventing telecom-related fraud, protecting citizens and ensuring a safe, secure and trusted telecommunication environment.

Citizens are encouraged to visit the **Sanchar Saathi Portal** at **www.sancharsaathi.gov.in** or download the **Sanchar Saathi Mobile App** to access the various citizen-centric services available on the platform.

For Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dot.app.sancharsaathi

For iOS: https://apps.apple.com/app/sancharsaathi/id6739700695

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