

**Administrative allocation of satellite spectrum to StarLink violates Supreme Court's direction in the 2G Spectrum case, involves a huge national loss to the public exchequer and poses a serious threat to national security**  
**Demand an immediate judicial enquiry**

E A S Sarma

Former Secretary to the Government of India

To

Shri T V Somanathan

Cabinet Secretary

Government of India

Dear Shri Somanathan,

I request you to refer to my last letter of December 19, 2024 addressed to you on the out-of-the-way, imprudent concessions granted by the Department of Tele-communications (DOT) in favour of Elon Musk's StarLink for highly strategic satellite spectrum bands, allowing that overseas company, which is working in tandem with the US defence services, to have a near monopoly on direct satellite surveillance over India, in open violation of the directions of the Supreme Court in the well-known 2G spectrum case, that spectrum bands should not be administratively allotted to private companies in an opaque manner (<https://countercurrents.org/2024/12/satellite-spectrum-should-be-exclusively-reserved-for-strategic-uses-do-not-compromise-national-security-to-accommodate-foreign-telecom-players/8-5-2025>)

In this connection, I have written numerous letters to the DOT requesting the latter to earmark satellite spectrum exclusively for strategic uses by ISRO and India's defence services and not grant undue concessions, in particular, to a foreign company like Starlink, and allowing that company to control the same, posing a serious threat to national security.

My last letter addressed to the DOT was on 8-5-2025 expressing my surprise and anguish at the DOT granting an extra-ordinary exemption to StarLink from the standard security licence condition that permits enforcement authorities to monitor the licensee's terminals near the international

borders (<https://countercurrents.org/2025/05/dot-should-revoke-exemption-to-starlink-from-indian-law-enforcement-authorities-monitoring-its-terminals-near-international-borders/>)

My previous letters to the DOT are readily accessible at the following web links:

<https://countercurrents.org/2025/03/elon-musks-starlink-forming-a-cartel-with-the-two-domestic-telecom-operators-to-appropriate-strategic-domestic-satellite-spectrum/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2025/02/india-should-tighten-safeguards-against-starlink/>

<https://countercurrents.org/2024/11/reserve-satellite-spectrum-for-isro-defence-applications-imprudent-and-illegal-to-allot-it-to-elon-musks-starlink/>

Meanwhile, both Bangladesh and Pakistan, like India, have meekly caved in to StarLink's demands and allowed that company to have a monopolistic sway over their respective satellite spectrum spaces, a development that has already caused widespread concern in India

(<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/starlink-launches-in-bangladesh-to-boost-reliable-internet-access/article69601428.ece> & <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/india-wants-to-know-more-about-starlinks-pakistan-and-bangladesh-links-report/articleshow/120812688.cms?from=mdr>).

No doubt, StarLink has the largest low-orbit satellite constellation in the world capable of providing high-speed broadband connectivity to almost all remote areas in the world, including strategic locations in India. India must however be aware of the company's cosy relationship not only with US defence services but the defence services of other countries as well, raising serious concerns about the company's monopoly over India's satellite spectrum and its potential threat to national security (<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/11/15/pentagon-silent-elon-musk-and-starlink-risks-military-use-expands.html>)

In the context of the recent conflict between India and Pakistan, following the ghastly attack by terrorists on unwary tourists at Pahalgam on April 22, 2025, and the subsequent statements made by the US on the ceasefire that ended the conflict, India unequivocally and consistently refuted the US statements (<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/11/15/pentagon-silent-elon-musk-and-starlink-risks-military-use-expands.html>).

While that is the case with India's defiant stand against the US on one front, it is ironic that India should at the same time display no hesitation whatsoever in yielding meekly to US pressure and allow StarLink against all norms of prudence to secure a monopolistic hold over its strategic satellite spectrum bands, despite the serious risk it poses to national security.

Against this background, I demand that the whole matter concerning StarLink's questionable appropriation of India's satellite spectrum space be subject to an independent judicial enquiry, which should cover, among other relevant issues, the following:

1. To what extent DOT's decision to allot satellite spectrum administratively without an auction is in compliance with the apex court's judgement in the 2G spectrum case?
2. In what respects the license conditions stipulated in the case of StarLink deviate from the standard license conditions, especially in terms of those relating to security, and their strategic implications?
3. What are the wider strategic implications of allowing StarLink's near monopoly over India's satellite spectrum bands vis-a-vis StarLink's association with the defence services of the US and its presence in Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries?
4. Is there a notional loss for the public exchequer as result of administrative allocation of satellite spectrum without the DOT going through a more transparent way of allocating it as stipulated by the apex court? What is the estimated amount?
5. If there are irregularities/ improprieties found in the allocation of satellite spectrum to StarLink, identify the authorities/ individuals responsible for it and suggest the penal action to be taken against them

Neither the DOT nor any other authority concerned with spectrum allotment directly/indirectly can absolve itself from public accountability, as spectrum bands are in the nature of a scarce natural resource that belongs to the people. Any arbitrary allocation of it to a private party violates the Doctrine of Public Trust.

I therefore call upon you to order a judicial enquiry as proposed above without any further delay.

If the government fails to respond to this letter promptly, I will have no other alternative than to seek judicial intervention.

Yours Sincerely,

EA S Sarma  
Visakhapatnam  
June 2 2025