

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1858
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 03.07.2019

VIOLATION OF DATA BY SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES

1858: SHRI SUMEDHANAND SARSWATI:

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

- (a) whether any case of misuse of data by private social media websites functioning in India has come to the notice of the Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government finds the existing cyber laws to ensure the privacy of data in India adequate;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has any plan to strengthen these laws; and
- (f) if so, the details of the action plan in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) and (b): Yes, Sir. Few instances of data breaches by private social media websites were reported in the media. Government took notice of reports about leakage of data by Facebook and Cambridge Analytica, and in responses to notices sent to them, Facebook conveyed that there had been unauthorised data leakage by Cambridge Analytica. However, since the reply given by Cambridge Analytica was not adequately convincing, CBI has been asked to investigate this matter with regard to possible misuse by Cambridge Analytica.

In addition, one incident of breach of personal data of Indian users from a social media company was reported to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). As per information available external actors exploited vulnerability in the form of software bugs impacting a feature provided for users on a social media platform. This allowed unauthorised access to users' account and information. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) issued advisories to users regarding best practices to be followed for protection of account information while using Social Media.

(c) to (f): Information Technology Act, 2000 has provisions for protection of sensitive personal data, section 43, section 43A and section 72A provides for privacy and security of data in digital form. Further, to strengthen the protection of personal data & Recognizing the importance of data protection and keeping personal data of citizen secure and protected, Government is considering bringing data protection legislation in the country. The Government constituted a committee of expert on data protection, chaired by Justice (Retd) B.N. Srikrishna, Supreme Court of India to study various issues relating to data protection and come out with Data Protection Bill. The said committee has brought out a draft Personal

Data Protection Bill (PDPB) on which consultations have been conducted and the bill is intended to be placed in parliament soon.
