

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 396
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 20.07.2018

DATA SHARING BY FACEBOOK WITHOUT SEEKING CONSENT OF USERS

396. DR. BANDA PRAKASH:

Will the Minister of Electronics & Information Technology be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether recently, there were media reports claiming that Facebook has agreements which are allowing phone and other device manufacturers access to its users personal information, including that of their friends, without taking their explicit consent;
- (b) whether Facebook has responded to earlier notices about breaches of personal data relating to the Cambridge Analytica episode and efforts to protect the privacy of users data on the platform; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA)

(a): Yes, Sir. There have been media reports including a news item in New York Times, USA on 03.06.2018 to this effect.

(b): Yes, Sir. Government has sent two notices to Facebook on 28.03.2018 and 25.04.2018 about breaches of personal data relating to the Cambridge Analytica episode and Facebook's efforts to protect the privacy of user's data on the platform. Facebook has responded to both the notices providing information in detail on 05.04.2018 and 10.05.2018 stating that it was a violation of their platform policy and breach of Trust not a data breach. Further, they have conveyed that they have initiated a number of measures to prevent recurrence of such violations.

(c): Consequent to media report claiming that Facebook has agreements which are allowing phone and other device manufacturers access to its users personal information, Government has sent a notice to Facebook on 07.06.2018 to which Facebook responded on 20.06.2018. Facebook has clarified that they are not aware of any misuse of information in respect of their earlier agreements with phone and other device manufacturers.

Government is committed to protection of privacy of its citizens. Government had constituted an Expert Committee under Justice B. N. Srikrishna to prepare a data protection framework. The Committee is in the final stages of preparing its report.
