THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI K. J. ALPHONS): (a) to (d) Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) *vide* its circular dated 10th January, 2018 has decided to implement Virtual ID. Virtual ID is a temporary, revocable 16-digit random number mapped with the Aadhaar number, which can be used at the time of authentication. The details are given in UIDAI circular dated 10th January, 2018 which is available on UIDAI website.

Action against websites publishing Blue Whale Challenge game

2503. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   the action taken by Government against the websites publishing Blue Whale Challenge game which led to suicides by teenagers in the country;

(b)   whether Government has formulated any mechanism to keep a check on such websites in future; and

(c)   whether Government has issued any guidelines to schools to prevent children from using such websites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI K. J. ALPHONS): (a) Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had constituted a Committee to investigate all cases where suicides were committed or attempted allegedly using Blue Whale Challenge game. The Committee findings could not establish involvement of 'Blue Whale Challenge game' in any of incidents reported to them. The Committee also could not find any specific website(s) hosting Blue Whale Challenge game.

(b)   Government has taken various steps to prevent harmful online games, such as:–

(i)   Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and CERT-In interacted with service providers of social media regarding the steps to be taken to prevent users from falling prey to harmful online games.

(ii)   Government has asked popular social media sites not to host any such dangerous online games and immediately remove the same as and when detected.

(iii)   Government has also published advisory/awareness materials on the websites, Newspapers, etc. regarding the dangers of Blue Whale Challenge game.

(iv)   MeitY published an advisory related to protection of children from Blue Whale Challenge game on its website *(http://meity.gov.in/advisory-blue-whale-challenge-game)* on 12th September 2017.

(v)   Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 provides for certain due diligence to be followed by Intermediaries failing which they would be liable. The Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011 notified under section 79 of the Act, *inter alia,* specifies that the intermediaries shall inform the users of computer resource not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is grossly harmful, harms minor in any way; violates any law for the time being in force; etc.

(vi)   Law Enforcement Agencies regularly monitor the social media sites and take action under existing legal provisions for removal of malicious contents/materials and prosecuting the offenders

(c)   Government issued Guidelines for Safe and Effective Use of Internet and Digital Technologies to all CBSE schools *vide* circular dated 18.08.2017.

Minister, Women and Child Development wrote to Principals of all schools in the country on 31st August 2017 to take immediate steps to protect children from Blue Whale Challenge game.

Increase in cyber security risks

2504.   SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a)   whether there is steady increase of internet created cyber security risks;

(b)   if so, the details thereof and Government/private reports received in this regard along with the reaction of Government thereto;

(c)   whether it is a fact that in India, more and more organisations believe that not all their data stored in the cloud is protected;

(d)   if so, the details thereof; and

(e)   the corrective measures being taken by Government to adopt next-gen security to minimise cyber threats, to transform and upgrade security strategy and systems to ensure the safekeeping of all data?