

Withdrawal of WhatsApp security vulnerability warning from the Cert-In website

2747. SHRI VIVEK K. TANKHA: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that WhatsApp Ltd. had informed Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) about the security vulnerability in May, 2019 which allowed the Pegasus software which allowed unauthorised monitoring to be installed on users phones *via* the phone and video call function;

(b) if so, what action was taken by the Ministry to intimate the public at large about such security loophole and reasons why the warning on the CERT-In website regarding the same was taken down on 2nd November, 2019; and

(c) if no action was taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) On May 20, 2019 WhatsApp reported an incident to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) wherein it was mentioned that WhatsApp had identified and promptly fixed a vulnerability that could enable an attacker to insert and execute code on mobile devices and that the vulnerability can no longer be exploited to carry out attack.

(b) and (c) CERT-In had by then published a vulnerability note regarding the vulnerability in WhatsApp on May 17, 2019 and advising countermeasures to users. The vulnerability note issued was never taken down from the website of CERT-In.

Policies on non-personal data

2748. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee of Experts have been constituted to study and recommend policies on Non-personal Data;

(b) the details of this Committee;

(c) what all data sets does Government consider to constitute non-personal data; and

(d) whether Government would respect the protection to proprietary data and commercial data as protected by the WTO and the Intellectual Property Rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Details are available at: https://meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/constitution_of_committee_of_experts_to_deliberate_ondata_governance_framework.pdf.

(c) and (d) These topics are part of the issues being deliberated upon by the above said Committee of Experts.

Slow down in electronics sector

†2749. SHRI LAL SINH VADODIA: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to take any step in anticipation of slowdown in electronics sector;

(b) if so, whether Government has taken any action in this regard till now; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) to (c) As a result of various steps taken by the Government for promotion of electronics hardware manufacturing in the country and efforts of the industry, India's electronics production has increased from INR 1,90,366 crore in 2014-15 to INR 4,58,006 crore in 2018-19, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 25%. It is also significant to note that India's exports of electronic goods has increased from USD 5.7 billion in 2016-17 to USD 8.4 billion in 2018-19. Hence, there is no slowdown in the electronics sector. Steps taken by government to increase production in electronics manufacturing sector are given in the Statement [Refer to the Statement appended to answer to USQ No. 2744 Part (a)].

Non-personal data governance framework

2750. SHRI MAHESH PODDAR: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.