(viii) Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a circular on 18.08.2017 to all schools on safe and effective use of Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools and School buses.

(ix) MHA released a booklet: "A Handbook for Adolescents/Students on Cyber Security" to create awareness among citizens especially students/children about various cyber threats that can impact the children and ways to safeguard themselves against cyber crimes. The copy of the booklet is available in the following link: *https://mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ CyberSafety_English_Web_03122018.pdf.*

Availability of Aadhaar data with private companies in Telangana

515. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Aadhaar data is shared to private companies doing Government e-projects in certain States;

(b) if so, the details thereof with particular reference to cases registered in Telangana State over Aadhaar data theft; and

(c) whether Government has examined the issue and how Aadhaar data was captured by private agencies and stores in foreign servers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Based on the Report of Inspector General of Police, West Zone, Hyderabad and I/c SIT, a complaint was lodged by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) which has been registered *vide* FIR No.278/2019 on 12.04.2019 at Madhapur Gutalla PS, Cyberabad against Management of M/s IT Grids India Pvt. Ltd and others.

Privacy breach of Indians by WhatsApp

516. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether privacy breach of Indians by WhatsApp have been reported recently;

(b)   if so, the details thereof;

(c)   whether WhatsApp had alerted Government about privacy breach of Indians in May and September, 2019;

(d)   if so, the details thereof; and

(e)   the details of action Government had taken on the alerts by WhatsApp?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DHOTRE SANJAY SHAMRAO): (a) to (e) Government had been informed by WhatsApp of a vulnerability affecting some WhatsApp mobile user's devices through a spyware namely Pegasus. According to WhatsApp, this spyware was developed by an Israel based company NSO Group and that it had developed and used Pegasus spyware to attempt to reach mobile phones of a possible number of 1400 users globally that includes 121 users from India.

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) published a vulnerability note on May 17, 2019 advising countermeasures to users regarding the above said vulnerability in WhatsApp. Subsequently, on May 20, 2019 WhatsApp reported an incident to the CERT-In stating 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 attacks.

On September 5, 2019 WhatsApp wrote to CERT-In mentioning an update to the security incident reported in May 2019, that while the full extent of this attack may never be known, WhatsApp continued to review the available information. It also mentioned that WhatsApp believes it is likely that devices of approximately one hundred and twenty one users in India may have been attempted to be reached. Based on media reports on 31st October, 2019, about such targeting of mobile devices of Indian citizens through WhatsApp by spyware Pegasus, CERT-In has issued a formal notice to WhatsApp seeking submission of relevant details and information.

Impact of MTNL-BSNL merger on MTNL

517. SHRIMATI SAROJINI HEMBRAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government has taken a decision to merge BSNL with MTNL and to make it a single entity;