



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER, 2022

Week-3

15-21 Sep, 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

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Government warns of new banking virus "Sova"

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) recently released advisory against the 'Trojan' virus, SOVA.

Key Highlights

- Indian banking customers are being targeted by a new type of mobile banking malware campaign using SOVA Android Trojan.
- The virus can stealthily encrypt an Android phone for ransom and is hard to uninstall is targeting Indian customers.
- The first version of this malware appeared for sale in underground markets in September 2021 with the ability to harvest user names and passwords via key logging, stealing cookies and adding false overlays to a range of apps.
- SOVA was earlier focusing on countries like the US, Russia and Spain, but in July 2022 it added several other countries, including India, to its list of targets.
- The latest version of this malware hides itself within fake Android applications that show up with the logo of a few famous legitimate apps like Chrome, Amazon, NFT (non-fungible token linked to crypto currency) platform to deceive users into installing them.
- This malware captures the credentials when users log into their net banking apps and access bank accounts.
- The new version of SOVA targeting more than 200 mobile applications, including banking apps and crypto exchanges/wallets.

How does the new virus work?

- The Malware is distributed via smishing (phishing via SMS) attacks, like most Android banking Trojan.
- Once the fake android application is installed on the phone, it sends the list of all applications installed on

the device to the C2 (command and control server) controlled by the threat actor in order to obtain the list of targeted applications.

- At this point, the C2 sends back to the malware the list of addresses for each targeted application and stores this information inside an XML file.
- These targeted applications are then managed through the communications between the malware and the C2.
- The virus can collect keystrokes, steal cookies, intercept multi-factor authentication (MFA) tokens, take screenshots and record video from a webcam and can perform gestures like screen click, swipe etc. using android accessibility service.
- It can also add false overlays to a range of apps and "mimic" over 200 banking and payment applications in order to con the Android user.

India Discrimination Report, 2022

Oxfam India recently released India Discrimination Report, 2022 showing Women, religious minorities and historically oppressed communities, such as Dalits and Adivasis continue to face discrimination in getting jobs, livelihoods, and agricultural credit.

Key Highlights

- As per report, discrimination in India causes 100 per cent of employment inequality faced by women in rural areas in the labour market and 98 per cent in urban areas.
- Apart from women, historically oppressed communities such as Dalits and Adivasis, along with religious minorities such as Muslims, also continue to face discrimination in accessing jobs, livelihoods, and agricultural credits.
- The report said that in rural areas, the sharpest increase of 17 per cent in unemployment was for Muslims compared to non-Muslims during the first quarter of the Covid-19 pandemic making the rural Muslim unemployment rate 31.4 per cent.
- The lower wages for salaried women are due to 67 percent of discrimination and 33 percent due to lack of education and work experience.

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- Oxfam India calls on the government of India to actively enforce effective measures for the protection and right to equal wages and work for all women. It should also incentivise the participation of women in workforce, including enhancements in pay, upskilling, job reservations and easy return-to-work options after maternity.

European parliament declared Hungary to be no longer a democracy

European Parliament recently declared in its report that Hungary was no longer a "full democracy" and that the European Union needed to act.

Key Highlights

- The response came after Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted 433 in favour, 123 against, in favour of the resolution.
- It described Hungary as "a hybrid regime of electoral autocracy" in "serious breach" of EU democratic norms.
- In their resolution, MEPs pointed directly at Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has been in power since 2010, and condemn his government's "deliberate and systematic efforts" to undermine the EU's core values.
- Lawmakers raise concerns about a long list of fundamental rights they believe to be under threat, including the electoral system, the independence of judiciary, privacy, freedom of expression, media pluralism, academic freedom, LGBTIQ rights and the protection of minorities and asylum seekers.
- The vote was largely symbolic and does not change the course of EU decision making, which requires unanimity of all 27 member states -- including Hungary -- to adopt positions on major issues, such as sanctions on Russia.
- Hungary is ruled by populist Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who maintains close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes India's first "Swachh Sujal Pradesh"

The A&N Islands have been declared the First 'Swachh Sujal Pradesh' in the entire country by the Jal Shakti Ministry.

Key Highlights

- Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat declared Andaman and Nicobar Islands as India's first Swachh Sujal Pradesh.
- He handed over the certificate to Lieutenant Governor Admiral DK Joshi.
- With this accomplishment, all villages on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have received the Har Ghar Jal certification and have been verified as ODF plus open defecation free.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands was declared to have achieved 100% coverage of rural households with tap water connection.
- It became the third State/UT in the country to achieve 100% coverage of rural households with tap water supply.
- On A&N Island, there are 62,000 rural households spread across 266 villages in 9 blocks across three districts. The UT has given piped water supply to all 368 schools, 558 Anganwadi centres, and 292 public institution centres.

Key components of 'Swachh Sujal State'

- Safe and secure drinking water supply and management
- **ODF Plus:** ODF Sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)
- Cross-cutting interventions like convergence, IEC, action planning, etc

EU court's ruling on \$4.4 bn Google fine

Europe's top court agreed with EU antitrust regulators that Google had abused its dominance but trimmed the fine by 5% because of a disagreement on one point.

Key Issue

- Since 2010, the European Union (EU) had been investigating several antitrust complaints against Google which include abuses of its dominant position in breach of the EU's competition laws.
- Europe's top court agreed with EU antitrust regulators that it had abused its dominance in android section.

Charges against Google investigated by the European Commission:

- The European Commission found that Google's algorithm promoted its own products in search engine results pages and demoted links of opponents. The commission fined Google 2.4 billion euros (\$2.7 billion) in 2017.
- The Commission, in 2018, said that Google abused its dominance in Android to unfairly favour its own services. The Commission claimed Google did so in part by forcing smartphone makers to pre-install its apps exclusively. As a result, the commission fined Google the equivalent of \$5 billion.
- The third European investigation claimed for allegedly stifling competition in online advertising. Google allegedly had with publishers using its AdSense tool that restricted them from showing ads from its competitors.

About European Commission

- The European Commission is the EU's politically independent executive arm.
- Its responsibility include, to represent the European interest and enforce the treaties and legislation that provide the legal foundation for the EU.
- Its members consist of a team of 27 Commissioners (one from each EU country).
- It is located in Brussel (Belgium).

Tamil Nadu launched breakfast scheme

The Tamil Nadu government recently launched the first phase of a state-wide free breakfast programme in Madurai for the students in Classes one to five in selected state government schools.

Key Highlights

- Tamil Nadu government rolled out the statewide mid-day meal scheme 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' for government school students from classes 1 to 5.
- The breakfast scheme will be implemented at a cost of 33.56crore in more than 1,500 government-run schools across the state from Monday to Friday.
- It will be benefiting 1,14,095 students across the state.
- In the first phase, 417 schools located in municipal corporations, 163 schools in municipalities, 728 schools in village panchayats, and 237 schools in interior villages and hilly areas will be covered under the scheme at a cost of Rs 34 crores.
- Under the morning breakfast scheme, every student is to be provided a cooked meal of 150-500 grams breakfast with sambar with vegetables. The breakfast will be prepared with millets available in the region and will be provided to students at least two days every week, based on the daily menu.
- The menu includes upma, khichdi, and pongal varieties. The schools can choose from the menu and frame their own package for five days a week, as per the students' health and requirement. Apart from the five days, on Fridays, students will be given a sweet-rava or semiya kesari with the breakfast.

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National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) released

The latest National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) released by the Union health ministry added 34 new medicines and dropped 26 old ones from the previous list.

Key Highlights

- A total of 384 drugs have been included in the National Lists of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2022.
- The list has got the addition of 34 new drugs, while 26 from the previous list have been dropped. The medicines have been categorized into 27 therapeutic categories.
- Several anti-cancer drugs, antibiotics and vaccines will now become more affordable as they are among 34 new additions to the National List of Essential Medicines, with the government saying this will reduce "patients' out-of-pocket expenditure".
- Anti-infectives like Ivermectin, Mupirocin and Meropenem have also been added to the list, taking the total drugs under it to 384.
- Four major anti-cancer drugs -- Bendamustine Hydrochloride, Irinotecan HCl Trihydrate, Lenalidomide and Leuprolide acetate which are effective in various types of cancers -- and psychotherapeutic medicines -- Nicotine Replacement Therapy and Buprenorphine -- have been added to the list.
- However, 26 drugs such as Ranitidine, Sucralfate, white petrolatum, Atenolol and Methyldopa have been dropped from the previous list. The deletion has been done based on the parameters of cost effectiveness and availability of better drugs.
- This revised list has come out after a gap of seven years. Its primary aim is to promote rational use of medicines considering three important aspects — cost, safety and efficacy.
- The drugs in NLEM are included in scheduled category and their price is regulated by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority
- A revised list of 399 formulations was submitted by an expert committee under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) last year.

Lumpy skin disease (LSD) virus

The Mumbai Police have ordered the prohibition of cattle transportation in the city to prevent the spread of the lumpy skin disease.

Key Highlights

- The Mumbai Police have ordered the prohibition of cattle transportation which means cattle cannot be moved out of the place they are being raised or transported to marketplaces.
- The disease has killed 127 cattle in Maharashtra, having spread to 25 districts.
- The contagious viral infection has spread in cattle in more than 10 States and Union Territories so far.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi informed last week that the Centre and States are working together to control the spread of the disease, which has emerged as a concern for the dairy sector.

About Lumpy Skin Disease

- LSD is caused by poxvirus Lumpy Skin Disease Virus (LSDV) and is an infection often seen in cattles.
- According to the FAO, the mortality rate is less than 10%.
- It was first seen as an epidemic in Zambia in 1929. Initially, it was thought to be the result of either poisoning or hypersensitivity to insect bites.
- It spread among animals by biting insects (vectors), such as mosquitoes and biting flies.
- Primary symptoms include fever, fluid excretion from eyes and nose, dribbling of saliva from the mouth and blisters on the body. The animal stops eating and faces problems while chewing or eating, resulting in reduced milk production.

India has emerged as the largest bilateral lender for Sri Lanka

India has emerged as the largest bilateral lender overtaking China with a total of \$968 million in loans in four months of 2022.

Key Highlights

- The report said the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been the largest multilateral lender in the past five years and disbursed funds amounting to \$610 million in 2021.

- India has disbursed \$377 million and ADB has disbursed \$360 million, which account for 76 per cent of the total disbursements in the first four months of 2022.
- India had provided nearly \$4 billion in food and financial assistance to Sri Lanka.
- In the last five years from 2017-2021, China has remained the largest bilateral lender to Sri Lanka disbursing \$947 million, out of which \$809 million was obtained as market borrowings from the China Development Bank.

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Roger Federer bid farewell to professional Tennis

Swiss tennis player Roger Federer has revealed that he will bid farewell to professional tennis after the conclusion of the Laver cup 2022.

Key Highlights

- The legendary tennis player shared a lengthy note to open up about his retirement plans.
- Federer, the former World No. 1, further confirmed that although the upcoming edition of the Laver Cup will be his final ATP tournament, he will continue to play tennis.
- Federer has struggled to feature in major tournaments in the past three years.
- In his trophy-laden career, Federer has played more than 1500 matches over 24 years.
- Federer has secured 103 career ATP titles since his debut. Coached by Ivan Ljubicic and Severin Luthi, Federer turned pro in 1998.
- Federer became the oldest World No. 1 at the age of 36 in 2018.
- Twenty-time Grand Slam champion Federer has never retired in 1,526 singles matches.
- The Swiss icon has played 223 doubles matches in his career.

Peace agreement signed between Centre, Assam Government and Tribal groups

The Centre and Assam government has signed a tripartite peace accord with eight tribal outfits of the state in the presence of Union home minister Amit Shah

Key Highlights

- Except the Paresh Baruah-led hardline faction of the banned ULFA and the Kamatapur Liberation Organisation, all other rebel groups active in the state have now entered into peace agreements with the government.
- According to reports, among the rebel outfits to have signed the peace deal are All Adivasi National Liberation Army, Adivasi Cobra Militant of Assam, Birsa Commando Force, Santhal Tiger Force, and Adivasi People's Army.
- The outfits are currently under a ceasefire deal with the government since 2012 and living in designated camps.
- A special development package of INR 10 billion, to be provided over a period of five years, for infrastructure development in Adivasi populated villages/areas.
- In January 2020, Shah had presided over the signing of an agreement between the Centre, Assam and Bodo representatives in New Delhi to end the over 50-year-old Bodo crisis that has cost the region over 4,000 lives.
- A total of 1,615 cadres of three National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) factions laid down their arms on January 30, 2020. Over 4,800 weapons, including AK 47 rifles, light-machine guns and stun guns, were laid down by the NDFB members at the time.

According to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (UMHA), the groups agreed to:

- Abandon armed group violence
- Follow the rule of law established by the Constitution of the country

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- Join the peaceful democratic process
- UMHA also shared the major provisions of the agreement which included:
- Fulfilling political, economic and educational aspirations
- Protecting, preserving and promoting social, cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities
- Ensuring rapid and focused development of tea gardens along with Adivasi villages/areas throughout the state
- Establishment of an Adivasi Welfare and Development Council by the Government of Assam

Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in SCO Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with leaders of SCO nations participated in the 22nd SCO Summit at Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

Key Highlights

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was welcomed by Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev as the former arrived at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit venue.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the SCO Summit and held bilateral meetings with the President of Uzbekistan and some of the other leaders attending the Summit.
- He held bilateral talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed issues related to food, fuel and fertiliser rising due to the Ukraine war..
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi for the first time in-person on the sidelines of the SCO summit here and the two leaders discussed wide-ranging bilateral ties, reviewed the progress in the development of Chabahar Port and regional developments including Afghanistan.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping called on the SCO member states to prevent external forces from destabilising them by instigating a "colour revolution".

Market-Based Economic Dispatch (MBED)

In order to move towards a "One Nation, One Grid, One frequency, One Price" framework, the Ministry of Power has proposed a centralized power model using MBED.

Key Highlights

- Under MBED, the entire annual electricity consumption will be operated using a central market operator while currently India follows a decentralized power procurement and distribution system.
- The government claimed that it will help in reducing power purchase costs, provide more flexibility and promotion of renewable energy.
- But it may lead to the loss of autonomy of states as power is a Concurrent subject and the responsibility for distribution and supply of power to rural and urban consumers rests with the states.
- It may make the discoms entirely dependent on the centralised mechanism.
- As per a recent study by the RBI, a bailout of discoms in 18 large states is likely to impose a burden equivalent to around 2.3 per cent of the GSDP of these states.

Cheetah reintroduced in the country

Over 70 years after it went extinct in India, the eight African cheetahs reintroduced in the country.

Key Highlights

- 8 Cheetahs from Namibia — five females and three males between the ages of 4-6 years — flown 8,000 km over the Indian ocean to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, where were released as part of India's Rs 90-crore Cheetah Introduction project.
- The loss of cheetah from India is attributed to myriad reasons, including large-scale capture of animals for coursing, bounty and sport hunting, extensive habitat conversion and a resultant shrinking of the prey base.

- The big cats have been vaccinated, fitted with satellite collars, and are currently in isolation at Namibia's Cheetah Conservation Foundation (CCF) Centre in Otjiwarongo.

Cheetah population in world

- According to the study, fewer than 7,100 cheetahs remain in the world.
- The cheetah is listed as Vulnerable by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.
- Two subspecies, the Asiatic cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) and the Northwest African cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus hecki*) are listed as critically endangered.
- The cheetah's historical distribution in Africa covered a substantial portion of the continent, but because of range contraction in the last century, the cheetah is found in only 9% of its historic range, of which 77 % is outside of protected areas.
- The species is nearly extinct in its entire Asian range, except for a remnant population in Iran, about 20 individuals or less.

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Government planning to introduce "PM PRANAM"

The Centre will soon introduce its Pradhan Mantri-Promotion of Alternate Nutrients for Agriculture Management Yojana (PM-PRANAM) to encourage states to cut down on their use of fertilisers.

Key Highlights

- On August 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had urged the farmers to reduce their dependence on chemical fertilisers. He appealed to the farmers to adopt natural farming practices.
- The PM-PRANAM scheme is aimed at discouraging the use of chemical fertilisers and promoting sustainable agriculture practices.

- The government under the proposed scheme will reduce the subsidy on chemical fertilisers which is expected to increase to Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-2023 – a 39 per cent hike compared to the previous year's Rs 1.62 lakh crore.
- The scheme will incentivise those states that use lesser amounts of chemical fertilisers in a particular year as compared with the average quantity used over a period of the last three years by providing incentive grants at the rate of 50 per cent of the total amount of subsidy saved by using less fertiliser.
- States can use 70 percent of such incentive grants for the welfare of farmers like setting up of bio/organic fertiliser plants.
- The remaining 30% grant can be used for incentivising those panchayats, farmers and self-help groups who helped in reducing fertiliser use.
- Farmers rely extensively on fertilisers like urea, diammonium phosphate (DAP), and Muriate of Potash (MOP) to increase their yields.

External Affairs Minister participated in the India-CELAC Quartet Meeting

India-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Quartet Meeting was held on sidelines of UNGA in New York under the pro-tempore presidency of Argentina.

Key Highlights

- Indian side was led by External Affairs Minister (EAM), Dr. S Jaishankar.
- The CELAC Quartet was represented by Foreign Minister of Argentina Mr. Santiago Cafiero.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction at revitalising the India-CELAC forum. They expressed happiness at the growing engagements of India with Latin American countries, and reviewed the entire spectrum of India-CELAC relations.
- The meeting took stock of developments towards a post COVID pandemic economic recovery, and agreed to work closely in sectors including Trade and

Commerce, Agriculture, Food and Energy security, Health, Vaccine production, Traditional Medicines and logistics.

- They also discussed regional and multilateral issues of mutual interests. Both sides acknowledged their cooperation in UN and other multilateral bodies, and agreed to work together on global issues including UN reforms and Climate Change.

About CELAC

- The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is an intergovernmental mechanism for dialogue and political agreement, which includes permanently thirty-three countries in Latin America and the Caribbean
- It is a regional forum that brings together all of Latin America and the Caribbean countries.
- It was created with a commitment to advance the gradual process of regional integration, unity and carefully balancing political, economic, social and cultural diversity of Latin America and the Caribbean of 650 million people.
- Since its launch in December 2011, the CELAC has helped to deepen respectful dialogue among all countries in the region in areas such as social development, education, nuclear disarmament, family farming, culture, finance, energy and the environment.

RBI removed Central Bank of India from Prompt Corrective Action Framework

Reserve Bank of India has removed the Central Bank of India from its Prompt Corrective Action Framework (PCAF) after the lender showed improvement in various financial ratios, including minimum regulatory capital and net non-performing assets (NNPAs).

Key Highlights

- The Mumbai-based bank came out of the PCA restrictions after more than four years.

- RBI had placed Central Bank under PCA in June 2017 due to high net NPAs and negative return on assets.
- Central Bank was the last of the public sector lenders to come out of PCA.
- Indian Overseas Bank and UCO Bank were removed from the framework last September.
- The bank has provided a written commitment that it would comply with the norms of minimum regulatory capital, net NPA, and leverage ratio on an ongoing basis.
- The performance of the Bank, currently under the Prompt Corrective Action Framework (PCAF) of the RBI, was reviewed by the Board for Financial Supervision.
- It was noted that as per its published results for the year ended March 31, 2021, the bank is not in breach of the PCA parameters.
- The Prompt Corrective Action norm is a supervisory tool and is imposed when a bank breaches certain regulatory thresholds on capital to risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR), net NPAs, and return on assets (RoA).

21st SEPTEMBER, 2022

India's presidency for AIBD extended

India's Presidency of the prestigious Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD) has been extended for one more year.

Key Highlights

- India's presidency of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development was unanimously extended for another year by AIBD member countries at the two-day general conference of the institute.
- The 47th AIBD Annual Gathering / 20th AIBD General Conference and Associated Meetings were held in New Delhi.
- At present, AIBD is chaired by Prasar Bharati CEO Mayank Kumar Agrawal, who is also the director general of Doordarshan.

- The conference was inaugurated by information and broadcasting minister Anurag Singh Thakur.

The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD):

- It was established in 1977 under the auspices of UNESCO.
- It is a regional intergovernmental organization servicing countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media
- Objectives: Achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.
- Members: The AIBD currently has 26 countries as full members represented by 43 organizations, and 52 affiliate members.

Global Registry of Fossil fuel launched

Climate campaigners have launched the world's first registry of fossil fuel reserves, production and emissions.

Key Highlights

- The Global Registry of Fossil Fuels is the first large-scale public database to track what is yet to be burned.
- A nonprofit think tank Carbon Tracker and the Global Energy Monitor, which tracks a range of global energy projects, jointly developed the registry.
- The inventory includes data from more than 50,000 oil, gas and coal fields in 89 countries, covering 75 per cent of global production.
- With the Registry, it will be much easier to include expected future emissions into the analysis, and thus identify and prioritize the companies with the greatest risk of harbouring assets likely to become stranded.

Special train announced for "Ambedkar circuit"

Union Tourism and Culture announced a special tourist train to cover the "Ambedkar Circuit".

Key Highlights

- Union Tourism and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy announced a special tourist train to cover "Ambedkar Circuit".
- The modalities — such as the date of journey, ticket price, number of passengers are still in the works.
- The train journey will include the places under "Panchteerth" which is a tourism circuit covering places related to life of BR Ambedkar.
- Panchteerth would include Janma Bhoomi, Ambedkar's birthplace in Madhya Pradesh's Mhow; Shiksha Bhoomi, the place in London where he stayed while studying in the UK; Deeksha Bhoomi in Nagpur where he embraced Buddhism; Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi or the place of his demise in Delhi; and Chaitya Bhoomi, the place of his cremation, in Mumbai.
- The idea is to attract tourists beyond the Dalit community, who mostly visit these places as a pilgrimage.
- The journey will include meals, ground transportation, and entry to the sites.

Other Tourism circuits

- The government had identified 15 tourist circuits under the Swadesh Darshan scheme in 2014-15.
- Ramayana, Buddhist, and North East Circuits are already active with train services while Ambedkar Circuit will be fourth.

