

Cyberattacks

- The first was the ransomware attack on the servers of India's premium institute, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.
- Nearly 40 million health records were compromised and it took over two weeks for the systems to be brought online.
- Soon afterward, a ransomware gang, BlackCat, breached the parent company of Solar Industries Limited, one of the Ministry of Defence's ammunition and explosives manufacturers, and extracted over 2 terabytes of data.
- Ransomware have emerged as the most predominant of malicious cyberattack.
- Here, the perpetrators demand hefty payments for the release of withheld data.
- Cyber capabilities are also playing a pivotal role, as seen in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, where electronic systems in warheads, radars, and communication devices have reportedly been rendered ineffective using hacking and GPS jamming.
- With cyber threats capable of undermining our critical infrastructure, industry, and security, a comprehensive cyber security policy is the need of the hour.
- In 2022, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), which is India's cybersecurity agency, introduced a set of guidelines for organizations to comply with when connected to the digital realm.
- This included the mandatory obligation to report cyber-attack incidents within hours of identifying them and designating a point's person with domain knowledge to interact with CERT-In.
- India's draft Digital Personal Protection Bill 2022 proposes a penalty of up to ₹500 crores for data breaches. Recently, India's armed forces created a Defence Cyber Agency (DCyA), capable of offensive and defensive manoeuvres.
- All Indian States have their own cyber command and control centers.
- Digital Geneva Convention, where over 30 global companies have signed a declaration to protect users and customers from cyber breaches, and collaborate with like-minded intergovernmental and state frameworks.
- With the introduction of 5G and the arrival of quantum computing, the potency of malicious software, and

avenues for digital security breaches would only increase

- With most cyberattacks originating from beyond our borders, international cooperation would be critical to keeping our digital space secure.
- This year, cybercrimes are expected to cause damage worth an estimated \$8 trillion worldwide. India has already signed cybersecurity treaties, and the countries include the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and the European Union.
- Even in multinational frameworks such as the Quad and the I2U2 (of which India is a member of), there are efforts to enhance cooperation in cyber incident responses, technology collaboration, capacity building, and in the improvement of cyber resilience.
- Previous years have seen the United Nations General Assembly establish two processes on the issues of security in the information and communication technologies (ICT) environment.
- One is the Open- Ended Working Group (OEWG), comprising the entire UN membership, established through a resolution by Russia.
- The other is the resolution by the U.S., on the continuation of the

Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), comprising 25 countries from all the major regions.

- The G-20 summit this year in India, which will see participation by all the stakeholders driving the global levers of power, is a rare opportunity to bring together domestic and international engagement groups across the spectrum, and steer the direction of these consultations.

THE HINDU

Submarine in Sunda strait



- In line with the expanding military cooperation with South East Asian nations, an Indian Navy Kilo-class conventional submarine, INS Sindhukesari, docked in Jakarta, Indonesia,
- “Highly enriching engagements with the Indonesian Navy conducted during a port call, strengthening the maritime partnership between India and Indonesia towards safer and secure Indo-Pacific,”

- The submarine, which was on operational deployment, travelled through the Sunda Strait and undertook the maiden docking in Indonesia for Operational Turnaround (OTR).

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Great Backyard Bird Count

- West Bengal reported the highest number of species of birds, followed by Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) 2023 across 35 States and Union Territories
- GBBC India is the Indian implementation of the global Great Backyard Bird Count, which runs for 4 days every February.
- Indian birders have participated in the GBBC since the event went worldwide in 2013. The 2022 edition of GBBC engaged over 3,782 birders who uploaded over 40,000 checklists and recorded 1,017 species!
- Tamil Nadu and Kerala took the eighth and ninth spots with 349 and 325 species, respectively.
- Kerala, on the other hand, recorded the highest number of checklists of birds, the Bird Count India (BCI)
- The BCI is an informal partnership of organizations and groups working together to increase collective

knowledge about bird distributions and populations.

- India was among 190 countries that participated in the GBBC 2023, an annual event that brings bird enthusiasts, students, and nature enthusiasts together for counting birds they see around the places where they live.

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(NMMS) App

- National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS) App was launched by the Minister of Rural Development on May, 21 2021.
- This app is aimed at bringing more transparency and ensure proper monitoring of the schemes.
- The NMMS App permits taking real time attendance of workers at Mahatma Gandhi NREGA worksites along with geo-tagged photograph. The app helps in increasing citizen oversight of the programme.
- The National Mobile Monitoring App is applicable for the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers for all the States/ Union Territories.
- The government made it mandatory to capture the attendance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) workers through a

mobile application National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS).

- However, the Ministry of Rural Development's own statistics points out that 41.3% of the gram panchayats have reported no NMMS usage.

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Recession

- The global economic outlook has improved in recent months, but uncertainties still remain.
- G20 nations to resolutely address the challenges, including debt distress and threats to financial stability, confronting world economies.
- "There is now greater optimism that the world may avoid a deep recession and only experience slow growth or a softer recession. Yet uncertainties lie ahead of us."

What is a recession?

- A recession is a significant, widespread, and prolonged downturn in economic activity.
- A common rule of thumb is that two consecutive quarters of negative gross domestic product (GDP) growth mean recession,

- A recession is a significant, pervasive, and persistent decline in economic activity.
- Economists measure a recession's length from the prior expansion's peak to the downturn's trough.
- Recessions may last as little as a few months, but the economy may not recover to its former peak for years.
- Unemployment often remains high well into an economic recovery, so the early stages of a rebound can feel like a continuing recession for many.
- Nations use fiscal and monetary policies to limit the risks of a recession.

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India and EU FTA constraints

- First, India wants to push taxation measures outside the scope of the treaty by making tax-related regulatory measures non-justiciable.
- The EU has difficulty accepting this proposition given the recent history of India's tax-related investment disputes with Vodafone, Cairn Energy, and Nissan.
- Second, the EU's investment proposal to India talks of creating a two-tier court-like system with an appellate mechanism and tenured

judges to resolve treaty disputes between investors and the state.

- This proposal is connected to the EU's stand internationally for creating a multilateral investment court (MIC), negotiations for which are going on at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).
- The MIC is aimed at overcoming the weaknesses of the current arbitration-based system of settling investor-state disputes.
- India's position on creating an investment-court-like system is unknown.
- Third, the EU's investment proposal contains a most favoured nation (MFN) provision to ensure that EU investors do not face discrimination vis-à-vis other foreign investors.
- On the other hand, India's position is not to include the MFN provision in its investment treaties because of the apprehension that foreign investors will use the MFN clause to indulge in disruptive treaty shopping.
- The solution to such disruptive treaty shopping is to negotiate for a qualified MFN provision and not exclude it altogether.
- Fourth, the EU investment proposal contains what is known as a fair and equitable treatment (FET) provision,

which is missing in the Indian 2016 Model BIT.

- The FET provision protects foreign investors, for example, by making the states liable if it goes back on the specific assurances made to an investor to induce investments on which the investor relied while making the investment.

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NCLAT

- National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from 1st June 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), with effect from 1st December 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.
- Hon'ble Justice Shri S.J. Mukhopadhyaya, former Judge of the Supreme Court, is now the Chairperson of NCLAT.

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