

Panel: Break encryption to trace distributor of child porn on Net

NEHA ALAWADI
New Delhi, 25 January

A Rajya Sabha panel has recommended the law should be permitted to break end-to-end encryption to trace the distributor of child pornography on social media.



THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- The 14-member committee has suggested breaking the definition of child pornography in POCSO Act 2012.
- An upgraded and technologically empowered NCPOR should be designated as the nodal agency to deal with the issue.
- The ministries of electronics and IT and home affairs should sign pacts with the industry to develop tech solutions for proactive monitoring of CSAM.

The 14-member committee chaired by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, has made 40 recommendations in all, including changes to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012. The recommendations assume significance in view of the ongoing battle between the government and WhatsApp over encryption.

The message shared on end-to-end encryption platforms in cases where CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material) that has been shared has come to the attention of law enforcement agencies, said the report submitted to the panel. Thereafter further steps should be taken to identify the provider (ISPs) proactively monitor and take down CSAM.

The committee has suggested broadening the definition of child pornography in POCSO, including a provision on child grooming or using the Internet to facilitate sexual contact with a child, in the Act.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) should be designated as the nodal agency to deal with the issue of child pornography, and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) should record and report cases of child pornography annually. "A national helpline should be created to receive reports on child pornography," the report said.

Other technological suggestions include that the ministries of electronics and IT and home affairs sign agreements with the industry to develop solutions for proactive monitoring of CSAM. Partner blockchain companies to track cryptocurrency transactions used to purchase child pornography online, besides increasing tie-ups with financial services firms, like credit card providers, to prevent online payments systems from being used for purchasing child pornography.

Experts see more pain for Bank of Baroda

ABHIJIT LEE & SHREEPAD AUTE
Mumbai, 25 January

Government-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) is yet to come out of the woods. Some more pain — it reported a spike in bad loans during the December quarter — is possible, say analysts, given the economic slowdown. Credit costs could stay elevated in the coming financial year.

Says Lalitabh Srivastava, deputy vice-president, financial services entity Sharekhani, "In the September quarter, the bank's NPLs were expected to have peaked out. However, even after removing the divergence-related impact, the quantum of slippage continued to remain elevated in Q3 (October-

December). We expect asset quality pain to continue in the near term, while the growth is likely to be tepid."

The bank's gross non-performing assets were ₹73,140 crore at end-December from ₹69,969 crore at end-September. The ratio of gross NPA to gross advances at end-December 2018 was 871.323 crore. The extra slippage in Q3 of 2019 was a little over ₹10,000 crore. Of these, ₹4,500 crore was due to two factors. One shortfall in provisioning which happens due to the value of securities, which deteriorates with the time for which you have to provide these. Two, asset qualification due to interperiodal issues. The bank had, he said, provided ₹3,000 crore in Q3 for the divergence RMI suggested.

ASSET QUALITY UNDER LENS

Bob financials over the last three quarters have shown a steady decline in asset quality. Factors that will influence bank's asset quality profile:

- Economic, business slowdown, and recovery
- Default risks in MUDRA loans
- Recoveries from large stress accounts

Broking house Motilal Oswal says BoB continues to report weak numbers as fresh slippage says elevated and business growth moderates. The appointment of Sanjay Chaudha as managing director and CEO removes one concern. However, the standing watch-list and SMA2 assets in a slowing economy remain a concern, it said. Jain said the bank was not unduly worried over the watch-list accounts; it was regularly monitoring these.

Vijitha Bhatra, co-founder at Fatconnect Business Advisors, said one has to be watchful of the burden of provisioning for some accounts. The macro economic environment would also have bearing on the asset quality profile.

How firms are bracing for Coronavirus impact

BLOOMBERG
January 23

A rapidly spreading viral outbreak is disrupting travel and business in China, which has taken unprecedented steps to lock down cities with a combined 40 million people around the epicenter in Wuhan to try to slow its progress. For global corporations, Wuhan is an important hub of about 2,000 cities in China with factories and other facilities, the city ranks 13th, with about 500 facilities. The province of Hubei has 1.016, making it seventh of 32 such jurisdictions. U.S.



Passengers wearing masks at the Changsha Railway Station in Hubei province on Sunday.

Wuhan is an important hub of about 2,000 cities in China with factories and other facilities, the city ranks 13th, with about 500 facilities. The province of Hubei has 1.016, making it seventh of 32 such jurisdictions. U.S. companies are bracing for the impact. Many plans are in the auto and transportation industries, and big names include PepsiCo and Siemens AG. As the death toll from the pneumonia-like illness rises and cases are found in neighboring Asian countries, including South Korea and Singapore, as well as in the U.S., the economic impact of the novel coronavirus could be widespread.

There is a rash of news so far about the impact.

January 26: HONDA MOTORS: The automaker evacuated from Wuhan with about 80 Japanese staff, family members and employees visiting on business trips. Terahiko Tatebe, a Tokyo-based spokesman, said on phone. The carmaker has informed the Japanese government that it wishes to utilize the charter jet planned to evacuate Japanese citizens. A handful of staff needed to maintain local operations will remain in the city.

January 26: GROUPE PSA: The French maker of Peugeot cars and Citroen said it will evacuate its expatriate staff and their families from the

NO INDIAN IN CHINA AFFECTED BY VIRUS: MEA
The External Affairs Ministry on Sunday said as of now no Indian in China had been affected by the coronavirus outbreak and the embassy in Beijing is in close touch with all Indians in Wuhan and elsewhere in Hubei province.

The Union health ministry said over 29,700 passengers from 57 flights were screened 11 Sunday for novel coronavirus infection at seven identified airports in the country but no positive case was detected.

January 26: WUHAN: Thirty-eight people will leave the firm said.

January 24: McDONALD'S: The fast-food chain said it will close 2,000 stores in China at the end of 2019, temporarily closing locations across five cities of the Hubei province due to the virus, including Wuhan. The Chicago-based company is taking extra preventative measures in the rest of the country, including taking the temperature of workers upon arrival and giving out hand sanitizers to diners.

WALT DISNEY: The world's largest theme park operator said it would close its Disneyland resort in Shanghai effective January 25. It is offering refunds to guests who bought theme park tickets or reserved rooms in its hotels.

STARBUCKS: The Seattle-based chain, with about 4,100 cafes in China, also said it's closing some locations, without providing more details.

DELTA AIR LINES: The Atlanta-based carrier issued a travel waiver that allows passengers traveling to or from through Beijing and Shanghai between January 24 and January 31 to change their itinerary once without having to pay a fee.

January 23: AMERICAN AIRLINES GROUP: President Robert Isom said it was too soon to see an impact. "Our network isn't that extensive in Asia. But we're on top of it," he said.

"We've seen viruses in the past that we've had to make accommodations for and to be prepared for, we're doing all those same things."

January 22: WUHAN: It was among the first global corporations to comment on the coronavirus on a earnings conference call.

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