1. How is fake news a grave internal security threat? Explain.

Introduction

Fake news is news, stories or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers. Usually, these stories are created to either influence people's views, push a political agenda or cause confusion and can often be a profitable business for online publishers.

It contravenes with the fundamental right to have informed choices and once exposed to it, the credibility of genuine news is decreased. Fake news can create adverse opinion for any subject or material and has the potential to be efficiently used for malafide propaganda. Mob lynchings in India, influence on US Presidential Election in 2016 and tension between Pak-Israel are clear cut results of fake news across the world.

Body

Dangers of fake news for internal security

It is misleading people, spreading false propaganda or maligning people as well as entire communities. It can severely impact the social, political and economic stability of a country.

The rapid spread of false information through social media is among the emerging risks identified by the World Economic Forum in its Global Risks 2013 Report.

- Fake can break the fraternity among citizens. It sparks panic and raises conflicts. Eg - Cauvery dispute when malicious rumors and fake news led to the antagonism.
- Communal tensions may develop as deliberately created content appeals to passions.
- Acting upon the fake news circulated through social media, the incidents of mob lynching have increased across the country.
- This is a severe threat to the security as victims are mostly from minority community and perpetrator is faceless mob. Thus security agencies can not act definitively.
- Fake news has the ability to create lasting hatred among various sections of society.
- It's used to vilify the image of political rivals while impacting democratic right to choose the right candidate.
- The extremists and fundamentalist groups are using fake news as a tool for spreading unrest in the society in Kashmir, North East, and Maoist infested areas.
- It has the prospects of destabilizing the markets and causing huge losses to the country.
- A simple fake news can make people run for their money from banks causing mass panic and causing law and order situations.

Conclusion

National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), Central Monitoring System (CMS), Internet Spy System Network and Traffic Analysis System (NETRA) of India, National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIPC) of India, National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) of India, Tri Service Cyber Command for Armed Forces of India are some of the step taken by India that will help to curb fake news.

2. How do terrorist organisations use various social media platforms to further their interests? Examine.

Introduction

Terrorism involves violence against public, with a political or religious desire. Terrorist acts are organized so as to attract large attention. The terrorist acts have become more dangerous with the advancement of technology.
According to a Report from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, United Kingdom, social media has been consciously failing to combat extremism and not doing enough to stop online radicalization.

Body

Role of Internet in Radicalization:

The ease of access to information and speed of use of social media has added a new dimension to use of technology by terrorist organization. As such terrorist organization use social media for:

- Radicalization: Social media is also been used by the like-minded individuals as a tool for radicalization. Muzaffarnagar riots in Uttar Pradesh got intensified because of misuse of social media by non-state actors
- Disruption in military operation against terrorist organization by calling crowd through social media as was seen in Burhan wani case.
- Propaganda: Terrorist networks utilizing social media to conduct ideological campaign covertly or overtly and massive.
  - Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has used social media and online propaganda for more than a decade, launching its English language digital magazine, which inspired the Boston Marathon bombers, in 2010.
  - Even the Taliban makes strategic use of social media, running its own Telegram channel, al-Emarah.

- Recruitment: Use of Internet, by terrorist organization such as ISIS in recruiting youth all around the world has become a reality.

- Advertising their deeds: The live streamed slaughter of 49 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, has shined a spotlight on how terrorists employ social media.
- Communication to partner : message conveying through social media
- Coordinating and planning attacks: Evidence of ISIS using social media platforms like Twitter, Telegram coordinate attacks has been found by UNDP report.
- Espionage and information gathering: Social media acts as an easy tool for data gathering, with thousands of pictures and information shared by each user. There is also possible use of honey trapping through use of Facebook and other social media for intelligence gathering.

Conclusion

As far as India is concerned, there have been cases of youths from Maharashtra and Kerala who wanted to join IS. There was a case of a corporate executive in Bengaluru who had lakhs of followers for his ideas supporting IS ideology.
Institutions such as Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) are there in UK to counter online extremism and India needs to have such mechanisms. Such practice can be adopted by India.
Section 79 of the Information Technology Act 2000 says that Intermediaries, like Google, Yahoo, Facebook and Twitter are not liable for third party information if they observe due diligence while discharging their duties.
Although no social media platform wants to willfully promote terrorism but terrorism, radicalization and extremism are something that has taken a gigantic shape. It needs simultaneous efforts both nationally and internationally to eradicate this disease.

3. What are the data security concerns related to social media platforms? What measures can be taken to address those? Suggest.

Introduction

Data security means protecting digital data, such as those in database, from destructive forces and from the unwanted actions of unauthorized users, such as a cyberattack or a data breach.
Cyber security is an important arena of internet when the country is moving forward towards a cashless society and digitization. Till 2013, India did not even have a cyber security policy in place. It is of paramount concern to take cyber security seriously in India with most of the transactions going online and cashless.

Body

Data security concerns related to social media platform

- Cyber Security becomes a challenge as now privacy is a fundamental right as per SC verdict and the rise in cybercrimes can lead to violation of private space and liberty of expression.

- The Indian government has embarked on a programme to turn the country into a digital economy. It has unveiled a series of initiatives—from introducing Aadhaar, MyGov, Government e-Market, DigiLocker, Bharat Net, Startup India, Skill India and Smart Cities to propel India towards technological competence and transformation.

- Photos, videos and other personal information shared by an individual on social networking sites can be inappropriately used by others, leading to serious and even life-threatening incidents.

- A cyber attack may lead to loss of competitive information such as patents or original work, loss of employees/customers private data resulting into complete loss of public trust on the integrity of an organization.

- A local, state or central government maintains huge amount of confidential data related to country (geographical, military strategic assets etc.) and citizens. Unauthorized access to the data can lead to serious threats on a country.

Measures that can be taken to address Data security concerns

- Real-time intelligence is required for preventing and containing cyber attacks.

- Periodical 'Backup of Data' is a solution to ransomware

- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for predicting and accurately identifying attacks.

- Using the knowledge gained from actual attacks that have already taken place in building effective and pragmatic defence.

- Increased awareness about cyber threats for which digital literacy is required first.

- India needs to secure its computing environment and IoT with current tools, patches, updates and best known methods in a timely manner.

- The need of the hour for Indian government is to develop core skills in cyber security, data integrity and data security fields while also setting stringent cyber security standards to protect banks and financial institution

Conclusion

4. What role can the media play in strengthening the internal security ecosystem? Suggest.

Introduction

Internal security, a subset of national security, is concerned with threats and challenges emanating from within a country and has the potential to threaten public order and national security. It has been well documented that mass media poses internal security challenges through various means such as terrorism which makes future of nation uncertain.

Body

"The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power, because they control the minds of the masses."

⸺ Malcolm X1 , an African American Human Rights Activist.

- India faces intense internal turbulence and disturbances due to rebellion movements, ethnic conflicts and religious fundamentalism. According to the Indian Constitution, "Public Order" and "Police" figure as entries 1 and 2 respectively in the State List in the Seventh Schedule whereas the union or central government can exercise similar powers only in the Union Territories.
- Our Constitution emphasises an active and independent media which is highly maintained on the ideals of freedom of speech and expression as contained in Article 19 of the Indian framework, and which allows the Indian journalists to be spontaneous activists in the overall governance of the country.
- Media role in internal security can be analyzed from the prism of news, views and issues. How it presents them to the populace can help either in strengthening or weakening the basics of internal security. In the globalized world it has to strike a balance between people's right to know on the one side and national security and social ethics on the other.
- The Indian media also continues to provide channels of communication, helping to educate, inform and exchange information between the public and its Government. Thus, the ability to influence the attitudes and behaviour of countries and their policies has helped the Government to initiate its national strategic goals through an integrated, coordinated and combined media that acts as a tool and channel for information dissemination and enlightenment.
- The mainstream Indian media reflects the distinct differences of its people and thoughts by supporting and catering to two types of media outlets and audience: the English language media and the non-English language media, including various newspapers, magazines and television channels, thereby upholding the difference in expression and perspectives of its multi-cultural population, and showcasing the true essence of India.
- To elaborate on the relation between media and its role in safeguarding national security there are a number of examples where Indian media has portrayed an effective role in providing information to the public, and confirming the actions of the government on the issues of national security.

In August 1999, Pakistan Navy's Naval Air Arm Breguet Atlantique patrol plane was shot down by the Indian Air force for violating Indian air space as it was flying close to the Indian border off the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

- In this case, the Indian media's support for its country and the timely information that it provided to the domestic and international audience, helped not only the Indian public but also the foreign media grasp the ground situation, which in turn, influenced the judgment of the ICJ against Pakistan.

- Further, many times, the media has brought out the reports of lapses in governments preparedness related to internal security and thus bringing accountability. In India, the media has played a great role in highlighting the issues of human rights violation by security forces, absence of latest arms and technologies with police forces and thus creating a public opinion against such lapses.

- It has helped in building resilience against any kind of efforts by ISIS to spread roots in India by creating a popular opinion against it.

- It has helped by giving a space for the dis-heartened people to vent their anger. This alternative has helped in maintenance of law and order in a great way.

- The Indian media's role in influencing national and international public opinion by analysing and providing coverage of worldwide events has grown immensely due to the 24x7 concept. It has helped the media and journalists to play a greater role in influencing high level national and international decision-making.

- But, in recent times because of proliferation of news channels and their rivalry with another for TRP instances of yellow journalism, dissemination of unverified news and one sided information by some unscrupulous news channels have emerged. Such actions of media have negative impact on long term internal security.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, the States need to deal with other States and a variety of supranational and Non-State actors. It is, thereby, important that the media and the institutions of security work together to educate the public, to understand the national security policy, and also hold policymakers to account.

5. Do you think left wing extremism has got further strengthened by the use of social media? Critically examine.

Introduction

A number of Left Wing Extremist outfits have been operating in certain remote and poorly connected pockets of the country for a few decades now. The Maoist insurgency doctrine glorifies violence as the primary means to overwhelm the existing socio-economic and political structures. This threat has amplified in recent times due to the advent of social media.

Body

- Turning away from their ancient method of handwritten letters and prehistoric communication system, the Left Wing Extremists(LWE) are now becoming tech savvy. They are using social networking sites and modern communication systems more effectively so that they can reach out to the common people particularly to the urban and semi-urban population- the area where the LWEs want to increase their domination.

- According to intelligence reports, the naxal groups are taking advantage of communication channels which have become more sophisticated over a period of time. From mobile phones, terrorists have moved on to the use of satellite phones, spoofed IDs and coded transactions over e-mail and chat sessions. Voice over Internet Protocol is also being extensively used to communicate across the border.

- LWE's have been using Facebook as an active tool for the propagation of their ideologies. This is an important observation as it goes on to show that Naxalites have started using the Internet as a medium of propagation. This is quite worrisome as they now have access to a user base of over 400 million Internet users in India, which accounts for about 35% of the Indian population.

- However, there are several other tools that LWEs use to communicate and coordinate better in an orderly fashion. Through the use of encrypted instant messaging apps such as Skype or Whatsapp, they can securely communicate with their fellow comrades regarding their plans and strategies for the battlefield without being easily tracked.

- Alternatively, the LWEs could also use digital marketing strategy to sow fear amongst the people, something similar to the ISIS terrorist group. ISIS used provocative twitter hashtag campaign (#AllEyesOnISIS) to give an air of inevitability to the looming destruction and atrocities as they marched into the Iraqi city of Mosul. Naxalites, in a similar fashion, can use similar provocative, choreographed videos to create a way of intimidation and fear amongst the general audience.

- In a bid to reach out to common people - particularly those living in urban and semi-urban areas - the Red rebels are making use of social networking sites and the internet. It is important for Naxalites to create their content in the English language to grab the attention of the urban and educated population.

- At the same time, Naxals use of the internet has provided an alibi for other forces inimical to causes of social justice to slander progressive thinking activists and people. Also, the reach and effectiveness of Naxals in use of social media has been doubted by many experts.

Conclusion

Considering the power and reach of social media, public movements even in the past have been strengthened and their reach has transcended geographical boundaries. While this might be put to some good use it might also be misused which is something to think about. Naxalites' violent approach has not been efficient in their struggle to be heard. Their use of social media can ultimately be a turning ground for them to create a more organized and coordinated movement to reach their goals.

India edition, one of the highest number of cyber threats have been detected in India, and the country ranks second in terms of targeted attacks. Although Banking and Telecom are the most attacked sectors but Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Retail have also faced a significant number of cyber attacks.