



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS III

- 'Cyber volunteer plan will create social distrust'
- Himalayan serow spotted in Assam



## ‘Cyber volunteer plan will create social distrust’

**News:** The Ministry of Home Affairs’ “cybercrime volunteers” plan targets to rope in around 500 persons to flag unlawful content on the Internet for “improvement in the cybercrime ecosystem of India”.

### Highlights:

1. The programme will include 200 “cyber awareness promoters” and 50 “cyber experts”, according to the output outcome monitoring framework of the MHA’s budget 2021-22.
2. The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), a digital liberties organisation, wrote to the MHA that the scheme will lead to a “culture of surveillance and constant suspicion in society creating potential social distrust”.
3. It said there is no information on how the Ministry will ensure that the scheme is not misused to extract misguided personal or political vendettas.
4. It should also be noted that there is no process in place for withdrawal of complaints once submitted, it said.
5. The MHA’s framework says it aims to hold regular consultation with “government bodies, academia, NGOs, private bodies, technical companies, etc.”.

## Himalayan serow spotted in Assam

### Highlights:

1. A Himalayan mammal, somewhere between a goat and an antelope, has been confirmed as the newest creature to be spotted in Assam.
2. A couple of nature guides had spotted the Himalayan serow, a goat-antelope, in the 950-sq.km Manas Tiger Reserve on December 3. The animal — a high-altitude dweller usually found 2,000-4,000 metres above sea level — was seen being chased by wild dogs.
3. Conservationists have now confirmed the animal as the Himalayan serow, spotted close to the border with Bhutan in Manas’s Bansbari-Mathanguri forest. The sighting augurs well for the health of the tiger reserve.
4. The sightings of rare animals and birds in Manas is an outcome of better access to remote parts of the protected area where extremists and hunters once ruled.
5. The Reserve is contiguous with the 1,057-sq. km. Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan. The black-necked crane was also recently sighted in Manas. The Buddhists revere the bird that nests in the Tawang region.



6. Officials in Manas said the critically endangered white-bellied hero was also seen a few weeks ago.
7. In February, birders had sighted the colourful Mandarin duck in the Maguri-Motapung wetland near eastern Assam's Dibru-Saikhowa National Park. This duck was last spotted in Assam 118 years ago.