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NCRB to Track Complaints on Sexual Violence

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The Ministry of Home Affairs has designated National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as the nodal agency for monitoring the complaints received on a government portal related to child pornography and sexual violence videos.

- The NCRB would coordinate with service providers such as Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp and ask them to block malicious videos and contents.
- It can act on such content either on receiving complaints or suo moto.
- It was also decided to share list of 500 keywords used in searching such content with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) like Facebook, WhatsApp, Google, etc.

National Crime Record Bureau

- NCRB, headquartered in **New Delhi, was set-up in 1986** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals** so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based on the recommendations of the **National Police Commission (1977-1981)** and the MHA's Taskforce (1985).
- It was constituted by merging the **Directorate of Coordination and Police Computer (DCPC), Inter State Criminals Data Branch of CBI, Central Finger Print Bureau of CBI, and Statistical Branch of BPR&D.**
- It developed **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** in 2009 which connects approximately 15000 police stations and 6000 higher offices in the country.

Background

- The **Section 67(b) of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008** clarifies who all are punishable for publishing or transmitting material that depicts children in sexually explicit acts.
 - Not just the ones who create and share content of child pornography but **also the ones who view, browse or download** such content are also punishable under the act.
- Despite a law in place, India is one of the biggest contributors and also consumers of child pornography.
- Taking cognizance of this, the Supreme Court in 2017 asked the Centre to implement the proposals given by the high-powered committee on videos of child pornography, rape and gang rape.
- Some of the **notable recommendations** of the committee were:
 - The search engines expand the list of keywords which may possibly be used by a user to search for Child Porn (CP) content.
 - These keywords should also be in **Indian languages and vernacular search**.
 - Government of India to form regulations for reporting of identified CP/rape, gang rape (RGR) imagery online.
 - There must be a **user authentication system**, a system in which the users who try to upload an image/video, falling within the subject content, using the pre-defined keywords, are put to a more rigorous verification process which would **have them believe that they would be traced**.
- Ministry of Home Affairs is also implementing the '**Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)**' scheme from **NIRBHAYA funds** during the period 2017-2020.
 - The home ministry will train 27,500 police personnel across the country to tackle cyber crimes against women and children under the scheme.
 - It also aims at setting up an online cyber-crime reporting platform to allow the public to report complaints of cybercrime including child pornography.
 - Twitter handle "CyberDost" launched for tweets on cybercrime Awareness.
 - Facilitate the removal of child pornographic content in coordination with concerned ministries.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs earlier in 2018, launched a centralised online portal, **www.cyberpolice.gov.in**, and helpline number '**155260**' to receive complaints pertaining to child pornography and rape/gangrape (CP/RGR) content.
- SC has also asked the ISPs to develop a mechanism to prevent the circulation of sexual assault videos and child pornography through their platform in a stipulated time.

Concerns

- According to experts, Google or any other prominent search engine for that matter cannot stop videos of child porn or sexual violence from being circulated.
- These are mere search engines and not the internet. They can almost take down an objectionable video from their search engine but cannot take it down from the internet.
- The blocking of keywords that are used while searching these content is also not sure to be helpful that much. If one keyword is blocked the culprits will come up with another new word.
- Peer-to-peer networks are used to circulate such content because after being connected to these networks, one can upload and download files without disclosing much personal information.