Governance

Teesta Treaty: An Ongoing Dispute

Context: In June 2023, during Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's state visit to India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the formation of a technical team to discuss the protection and management of the Teesta River. This move revived attention to the long-standing Teesta water-sharing issue between India and Bangladesh.

India's Stand on Teesta Water Sharing

- Following Modi's announcement, India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra clarified that the discussions were focused on managing the Teesta River's water flow rather than negotiating water-sharing agreements.
- While the central government supported this stance, West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed dissent.
- She insisted that any discussions on Teesta water should involve the state, citing potential adverse impacts on the population in north Bengal.

Background of the Teesta Dispute

- The Teesta River originates in Sikkim and flows into Bangladesh, playing a crucial role in agriculture and the environment.
- A proposed treaty from 2011, nearly finalized by India's UPA-II government, aimed to allocate 42.5% of the water to India and 37.5% to Bangladesh.
- However, the agreement was stalled due to opposition from Mamata Banerjee, who argued that it could harm West Bengal.

Index & Report

Global Liveability Inex 2024

Context: The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has published its latest Global Liveability Index for 2024, ranking Vienna, Austria, as the world's most livable city. The index evaluates cities based on education, healthcare, culture, environment, stability, and infrastructure.

2024 Top Rankings Overview

- **1st Place:** Vienna, Austria
- **2nd Place:** Copenhagen, Denmark
- **3rd Place:** Zurich, Switzerland
- **4th Place:** Melbourne, Australia (previously 3rd)
- **5th Place (tie):** Calgary, Canada, and Geneva, Switzerland
- Additional cities in the top ten include Osaka, Japan, and Auckland, New Zealand, both recognized for their high liveability standards.

Science & Technology

Snowblind Malware Targeting Android Devices

Context: With the rise of mobile banking, users experience unprecedented convenience in managing their finances. However, this shift has also attracted hackers aiming to steal sensitive user data. Promon, a cybersecurity company, recently discovered a new threat named "Snowblind" malware. This malware specifically targets Android devices to steal banking information.

Characteristics of Snowblind Android Malware

- Snowblind is designed to infiltrate Android devices, capture banking login credentials, and execute unauthorized transactions.
- The malware cleverly disguises itself by repackaging legitimate applications into malicious ones, effectively evading detection by security software.

- Exploiting accessibility features, it extracts sensitive data and remotely takes control of the infected device.

Distribution Method

- Snowblind primarily spreads through social engineering techniques. Users are deceived into downloading malicious apps that appear legitimate.
- These apps are typically not found in official app stores, indicating their distribution through alternative platforms or phishing schemes.

International Relation

Vikram Misri Appointed as India's New Foreign Secretary

Context: Vikram Misri, an experienced diplomat, has been appointed as India's new Foreign Secretary, starting his term on July 15. This appointment follows the six-month extension of Vinay Mohan Kwatra's tenure earlier this year. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved Misri's appointment, as per a statement from the Personnel Ministry.

Career Highlights

- Joining the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1989, Misri has held significant positions, including India's ambassador to China, Spain, and Myanmar.
- His extensive experience in global and bilateral relations is further demonstrated by his roles in the External Affairs Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office, and various international assignments.

Further Contributions and Roles

- Before being named Foreign Secretary, Misri served as Deputy NSA from January 1, 2022.
- He has also been the private secretary to three Indian Prime Ministers: I.K. Gujral, Manmohan Singh, and Narendra Modi.

- His work across different Indian Missions worldwide has enriched his expertise in international diplomacy.

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