

INDIA'S CYBERTHREAT CHALLENGES INCLUDE MALWARE, RANSOMWARE AND DRIVE-BY DOWNLOAD ATTACKS, MICROSOFT SAYS

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Microsoft's assessment of India's cyberthreat landscape shows the country's biggest threat comes from malware, ransomware and drive-by download attacks.

The findings from *Microsoft Security Endpoint Threat Report 2019* indicate that India is placed high in ransomware, drive-by download, and malware attacks, from a list of 15 countries in Asia Pacific region assessed by the technology company.

India jumped nine spots to take the second spot in the drive-by download attacks by volume, across the region, compared with 2018. Singapore was most hit by drive-by download attacks, followed by India and Hong Kong. In a drive-by download attack, users unintentionally download a malicious code that exploits vulnerabilities in web browsers or operating system.

India's ransomware encounter rate was twice as high as the regional average, and over three times higher than the global average, according to the report.

"Typically, high malware encounters are a result of excessive usage of unlicensed or pirated software, and proliferation of sites that illegitimately offer free software or content, such as video streaming," said Keshav Dhakad, Group Head, External & Legal Affairs, Microsoft India, in a statement.

India was ranked third among countries with the highest ransomware encounter rates in the region, followed by Indonesia. In a ransomware attack, malicious software disables a device or its files, until the attacker is paid a ransom.

"Cybercriminals capitalize on drive-by download technique to target the organizations and end-users with the objective to steal valuable financial information or intellectual property," said Dhakad.

The country's cryptocurrency mining encounter rate decreased in comparison with 2018, as it moved down to the second spot, while Sri Lanka took the top spot. However, India's encounter rate is still 4.6 times higher than the regional and global average.

"We'd like to emphasize that the high encounter rate does not necessarily translate into a high infection rate as the level of cyber hygiene and usage of genuine software prevents the systems from getting compromised," explained Dhakad.

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