TOO MUCH BANK FRAUD

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues relating to Growth & Development - Banking, NPAs and RBI

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As personal data gets harder to protect and online banking ever more complex, Indians seem increasingly vulnerable to being ripped off. According to the Reserve Bank of India's annual report, cases of major fraud reported in 2019-20 added up to 1.85 trillion, more than double the previous year's figure. Large-credit frauds made up the bulk, with public sector banks the worst hit.

But low-value online fraud is a worry, too. For net transactions, banks use double-verification protocols that demand a password, as well as a one-time code, sent to a registered mobile phone. But hackers can install spyware on phones to steal both. With people's account numbers all over the internet, lazier thieves can also have a go. Ever since banking went mostly faceless, customers have found it difficult to get even a voice at the bank's end to speak with. So, when nameless callers pretend to be calling from banks, too many recipients of these calls—especially those befuddled by bank apps—are grateful rather than suspicious. Those who get vital information coaxed out of them suffer. Banks should ponder the consequences of their receding brick-and-mortar presence.

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