Exposing the Deceit: Phishing Sites Impersonating Government Entities

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By Harihara Sudhan February 18, 2025

Threat actors impersonating a Government entity, and using their fake authority and trustworthiness to coerce the victims to divulge their personal or banking details through a Phishing page or an App or a direct voice call is a well-known trend. In India, "Digital Arrest" is the new fad in this trend, and our government is actively working to educate citizens on how to protect themselves.

A particularly alarming aspect of this is when the targets are employees of government institutions and agencies. There have been several instances of advanced persistent threats (APTs) and external parties targeting military personnel, research institutes, and even educational institutions. This targeting is sometimes long-drawn and reuses the tools, framework, and other infra. In this blog, we will present two recent examples of such attacks in which the threat actors masquerade as Government and Judicial entities. We recently came across a tweet, in which was mentioned a few fake Indian government sites.



Figure 1: The tweet

Let's take a look at the domain "**spcourt-in[.]com.**". This phishing site is designed to closely resemble the official website of the Supreme Court of India. This fake site collects PII (Personally Identifiable Information), bank account details, etc.

The major difference between the fake and the original site is the presence of those three logos at the bottom right, where the site harvests user data.



Figure 2: Phishing site posing as The Supreme Court of India website

On the bottom right part of the page, three clickable icons appear to represent official organizations, including the "Central Bureau of Investigation," "Reserve Bank of India," and "Supreme Court of India," just to provide some 'fake' authenticity to their site.



Figure 3: The Original site

Clicking on the CBI logo (the first logo) takes the user to a page where they are prompted to enter details, such as their Aadhar number.

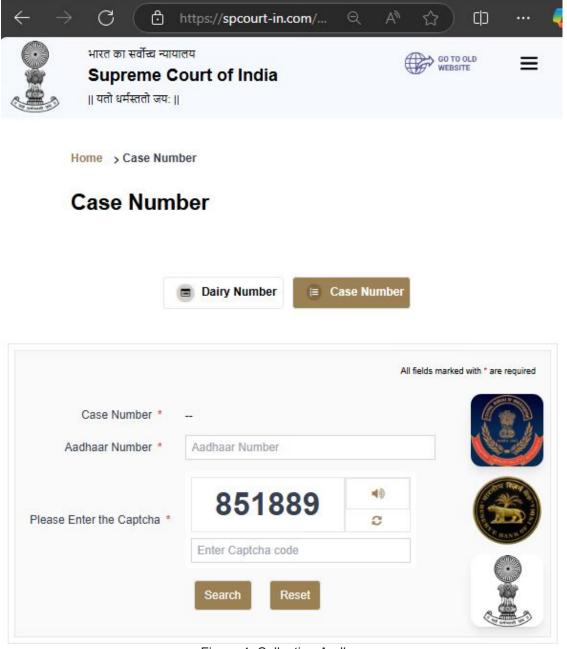


Figure 4: Collecting Aadhar

Clicking on the RBI logo (the second logo) leads the user to a page where they are asked to verify personal information. During this process, the site collects details such as date of birth, Aadhaar number, contact information, and bank account details (including passwords). At a later point in this blog, we will discuss what happens to the data that is being collected via these forms.

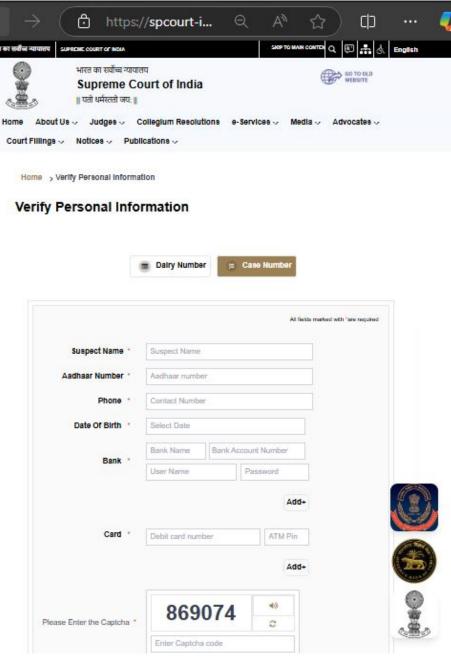


Figure 5: Collecting Personal & Bank Details

Detailed Analysis on Spcourt-in[.]com

The IP address of the phishing site is "64.31.22.34" was registered on 27-01-2025 and has validity for a year. The website is hosted on servers provided by **Hosterpk[.]com**, a web hosting company based out of **Pakistan**. This information further suggests that the site is likely to be managed from outside India.

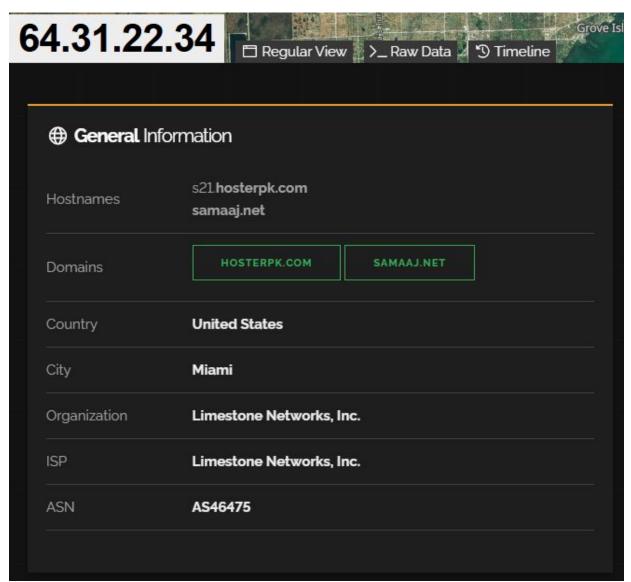


Figure 6: IP-details-I

Domain Name: SPCOURT-IN.COM

Registry Domain ID: 2954178573_DOMAIN_COM-VRSN Registrar WHOIS Server: whois.matbao.net Registrar URL: http://www.matbao.net Updated Date: 2025-01-27T15:55:30Z Creation Date: 2025-01-27T15:55:30Z Registry Expiry Date: 2026-01-27T15:55:30Z

Registrar: MAT BAO CORPORATION

Registrar IANA ID: 1586

Registrar Abuse Contact Email: abuse@matbao.com Registrar Abuse Contact Phone: +84-36229999 - 8899

Domain Status: clientTransferProhibited https://icann.org/epp#clientTransferProhibited

Name Server: DNS1.HOSTERPK.COM Name Server: DNS2.HOSTERPK.COM

DNSSEC: unsigned

Figure 7: IP-details-II

TLS details

The certificate is issued by the organization "Let's Encrypt". While Let's Encrypt is known for providing free SSL certificates to secure websites, its use here indicates that the attacker is attempting to give the phishing site a legitimate and secure appearance, which could give a false sense of security to users into trusting this site with their PII.

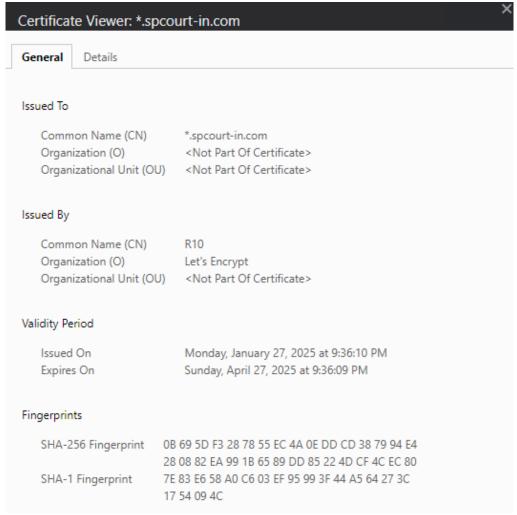


Figure 8: Certificate Details

The below image shows a list of PHP scripts used for processing the collected data.

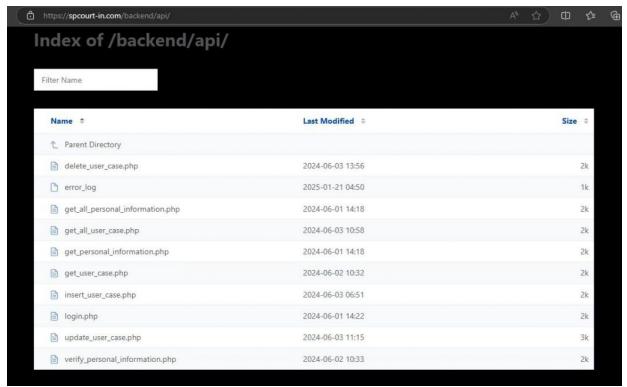


Figure 9: backend/api found on the Phishing site

The forms on the site collecting the personal data and bank details are processed through the "get_all_Personal_information.php" and the data submitted are stored in JSON format.

Figure 10: Data we entered in the forms stored in PHP

This domain hosts several JavaScripts as shown below.

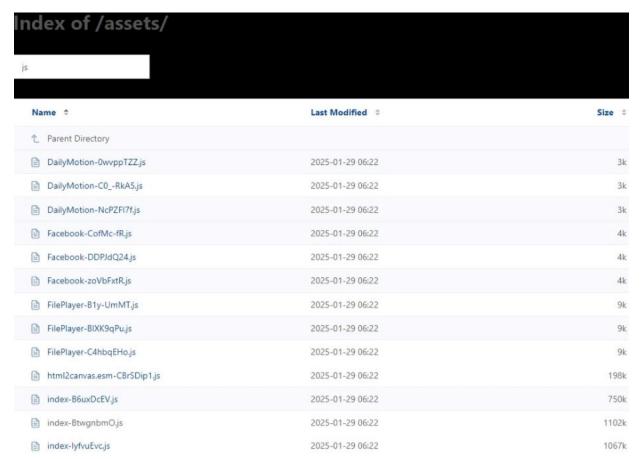


Figure 11: JavaScripts present in the site

We also checked for signs of any IP abuse and discovered that the IP address associated with the Phishing site had been involved in a **WordPress brute force attack**.

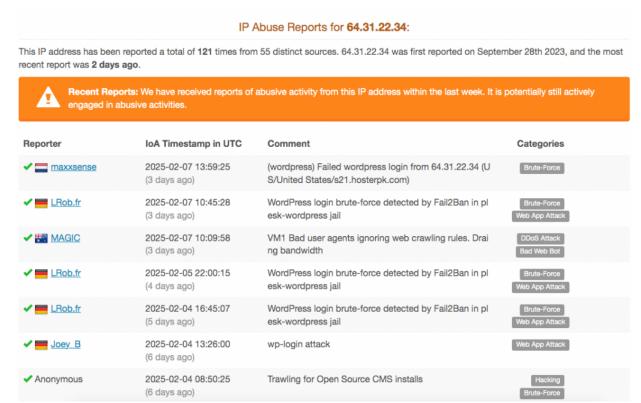


Figure 12: Abuse Reports from the IP

There is also a history of **Lumma Stealer** being hosted on this site at an earlier point in time.

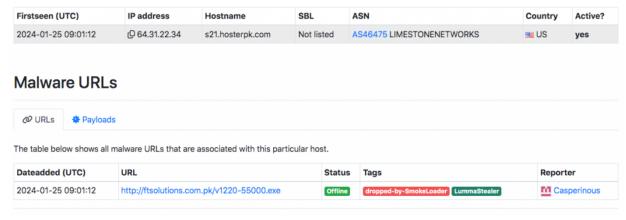


Figure 13: Malware history for the IP

While performing a reverse IP lookup for the address **64.31.22.34**, we discovered that another domain, **supremecourt-india[.]com**, was also hosted on the same server. This further suggests that multiple phishing sites may be operating from the same infrastructure, potentially targeting users by impersonating government entities in an attempt to harvest user data.



Figure 14: Reverse IP Results

By searching with the filter for the website title "The Supreme Court of India | India" and specifying that the hosting country is not India, we obtained several results showing fake sites, some of which were already on the block list as shown in Fig 16. From these findings, it's clear that these Phishing sites have been active for quite some time, indicating a prolonged campaign. However, the exact **modus operandi** of the attacker remains unclear. Specifically, it is unknown how the attacker plans to approach users and convince them to divulge their PII on these fraudulent sites.

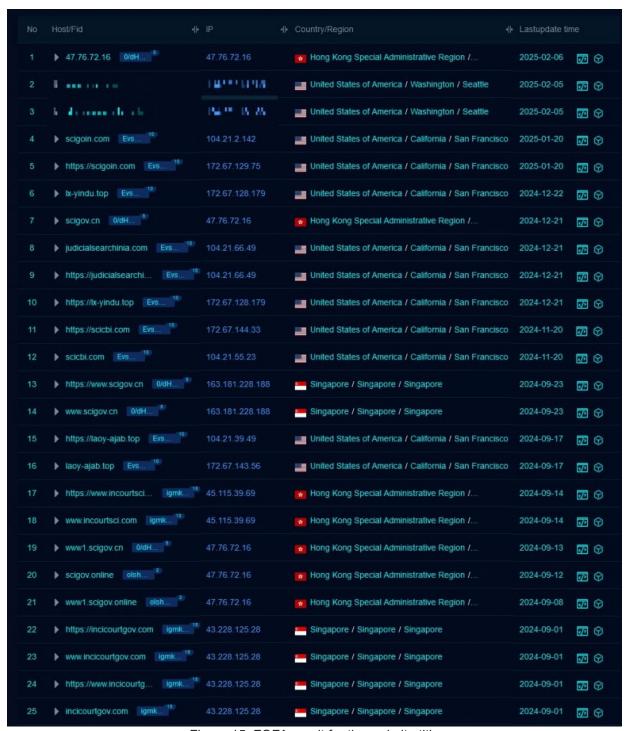


Figure 15: FOFA result for the website title

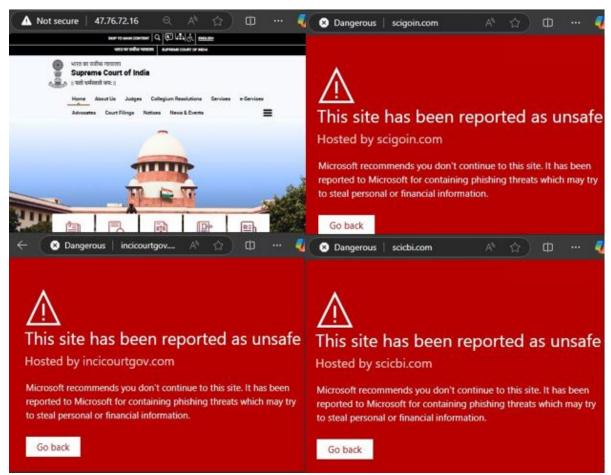


Figure 16: Screenshots of Supreme Court impersonating sites

Now let's examine the second site mentioned in the tweet, which is "email[.]gov[.]in[.]defenceindia[.]link". This also is a phishing domain impersonating an official Indian government site.



Figure 17: Phishing site

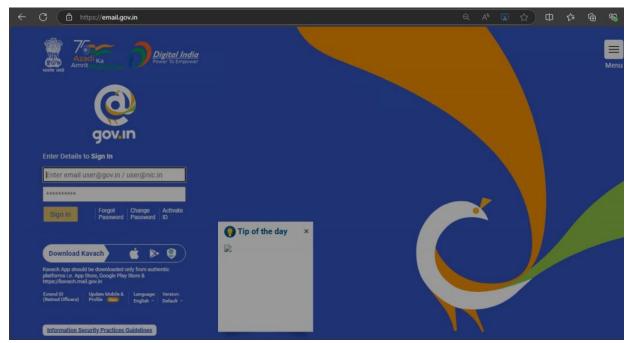


Figure 18: Original Site

Of late, many impersonators of "email.gov.in" have been seen in the wild, searching on **Malware Bazaar**, we can see tags like Malware and RATs associated with them, all linked to **SideCopy**, a well-known APT operating out of Pakistan.

Date (UTC)	ΊĮ	IOC	†↓	Malware	ŢĮ	Tags	Reporter	ŢĴ
2025-02-10 18:01:00		₱ b5a2949defda9a282aa307580118f9		☆ Unknown malware		APT SideCopy	abuse_ch	
2025-02-10 18:01:00		C cc90bf946b495aec9133f6c970dc873		☆ Unknown malware		APT SideCopy	*** abuse_ch	
2025-01-23 19:45:46		🗘 drjagrutichavan.com		爺 Unknown malware		APT SideCopy	abuse_ch	
2025-01-21 19:46:50		🗘 https://www.email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .ministryofd		∄ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:50		🖒 https://www.email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indiandefe		🛣 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:50		🕒 https://www.email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indiandefe		🛣 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:50		https://www.email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indiagov.ws		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:50		https://webmail.putir.shop		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		🖒 https://email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .ministryofdefenc		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		🖒 https://email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indiagov.ws		∄ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		🕒 https://email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indianarmy.ml		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		🖒 https://email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indiandefence.link		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		🖒 https://email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .indiandefence.nl		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		🖒 https://email. <mark>gov.in</mark> .mailindia.one		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:49		https://mail.putir.shop		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:48		https://email.gov.in.briefreport.nl		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:48		https://b.putir.shop		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:48		https://a.putir.shop		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		🖒 indiandefence.link		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		D putir.shop		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21				☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		🗘 indianarmy.ml		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		🗘 indiagov.ws		☆ Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		© govs.info		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		□ briefreport.nl		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-21 19:46:21		🗘 ail-govs.icu		我 Unknown malware		SideCopy	# juroots	
2025-01-13 11:58:27		cemail.gov.in.ministryofdefenceindia.l		☆ Crimson RAT		SideCopy	fibanocci3	
2024-12-13 09:23:29		nail.gov.in.mailindia.one		我 Unknown malware		APT SideCopy	abuse_ch	
2024-12-13 09:23:29		🗘 mailindia.one		爺 Unknown malware		APT SideCopy	abuse_ch	

Figure 19: SideCopy IoCs

The data shown in the image below was obtained by applying the filter for the website title "Email Web Client Sign In" with the hosting country, not India.

No	Host/Fid 네		Country/Region	Lastupdate time	
1	https://93.157.106.225 T09 ¹⁹	93.157.106.225	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2025-02-12	₩ 🕏
2	email-govs.icu mXF ⁵	172.67.130.208	United States of America / California / San Francisco	2025-02-08	₩ 🕏
3	https://email-govs.icu mXF	172.67.130.208	United States of America / California / San Francisco	2025-02-08	₩ 🕏
4	▶ https://80.225.193.92 xfcs [₹]	80.225.193.92	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2025-02-07	₩ 🕏
5	https://80.225.193.92;8443 xfcs *	80.225.193.92	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2025-02-05	₩ 🕏
6	https://176.65.139.63 T09 19	176.65.139.63	Germany / Rheinland-Pfalz / Erlenbach	2025-01-31	₩ 😯
7	https://www.email.gov.in.ministryofdefenceindia.link	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2025-01-14	₩ 🕏
8	https://email.gov.in.ministryofdefenceindia.link 109 19	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2025-01-13	₩ 🕏
9	▶ https://ail-govs.icu mXF ⁵	172.67.190.34	United States of America / California / San Francisco	2025-01-11	
10	▶ ail-govs.icu mXF ⁸	104.21.10.120	United States of America / California / San Francisco	2025-01-11	₽
11	▶ https://email.gov.in.indiandefence.nl T09 19	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2025-01-11	 ♀
12	https://www.email.gov.in.indiandefence.nl T09 19	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2025-01-08	₩ 😯
13	https://www.email.gov.in.indiandefence.link T09	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2024-12-25	₩ 😯
14	https://email.gov.in.indiandefence.link T09 19	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2024-12-25	₩ 😯
15	https://45.202.35.172 T09 19	45.202.35.172	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2024-12-24	₩ 😯
16	https://putir.shop T09 19	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-21	₩ 😯
17	https://email.gov.in.indianarmy.ml T09 19	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-21	₩ 😯
18	https://mail.putir.shop T09 19	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-21	
19	https://email.gov.in.mailindia.one T09 19	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-21	₩ 😯
20	https://webmail.putir.shop T09 18	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-21	 ②
21	https://a.putir.shop T09 19	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-15	₩ 😯
22	https://b.putir.shop T09	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-15	₽ ♀
23	https://93.157.106.19 T09	93.157.106.19	United States of America / Florida / Jacksonville	2024-12-10	₩ 🕏
24	https://email.gov.in.indiagov.ws T09	45.202.35.172	▶ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2024-11-20	₩ 🕏
25	https://www.email.gov.in.indiagov.ws T09 19	45.202.35.172	■ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region /	2024-11-20	₩ 🕏

Figure 20: FOFA results for the title client sign-in



Figure 21: Screenshots of sites impersonating email.gov.in

Phishing-based traps have become more and more sophisticated of late, making it difficult for users to discern. Netizens should be cautious of the links they are clicking and do some basic checks to make sure they are being redirected to the right channel. They should also be cautious of the data that they are revealing and should discern if such information is definitely needed for their query to be solved. Cybersecurity awareness and having a reputed malicious website blocker such as "K7 Total Security" can help users stay protected from such online scams.

References

- https://x.com/500mk500/status/1887282887331901851
- https://x.com/Cyberteam008/status/1881174353376874861
- https://github.com/stamparm/maltrail/blob/master/trails/static/malware/apt_transparenttribe.txt

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