



DIGITAL ARREST: NATIONAL ISSUE

NEWS: Indians lose over Rs 120 cr in digital arrest frauds; PM Modi cautions risk

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

In early 2024, data from India's Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) revealed an alarming rise in "digital arrest" frauds. This form of cybercrime involves criminals posing as law enforcement officers and demanding money from their targets, leading to a financial loss of Rs 120.30 crore for Indian victims in the first quarter alone. This highlights a troubling trend, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi underscoring the issue's importance.

Digital Arrest Frauds

- **Scam Method:** Criminals pose as police officials via video calls (often on Skype), falsely accusing victims of crimes and demanding financial "settlements."
- **Tactics:** Victims are pressured to comply, with family or friends manipulated for additional leverage, and are kept under watch until payments are made.

Rising Cybercrime Trends and Regional Sources

I4C Findings:

- Nearly 46% of cyber frauds reported (Jan-Apr 2024) traced back to Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia.
- India saw a surge in cybercrime complaints from 4.52 lakh (2021) to 15.56 lakh (2023), with 7.4 lakh complaints in early 2024 alone.

Major Fraud Types (2024 losses):

- **Digital Arrest Frauds:** ₹120.30 crore
- **Trading Scams:** ₹1,420.48 crore (highest impact)
- **Investment Scams:** ₹222.58 crore
- **Romance/Dating Scams:** ₹13.23 crore

Southeast Asia as a Cybercrime Hub

- **I4C Analysis:** Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia are key hubs where criminals target Indians with advanced scams.
- **Methods:** Fraudsters lure victims through fake job offers and financial traps, using technology and impersonation tactics.
- **Need for Action:** The situation calls for stronger international cooperation and enhanced cybersecurity in India to combat cross-border cybercrime.



'DIGITAL ARREST'



What exactly is 'Digital arrest'?

- New **cyber fraud**
- Accused video call and pose as law enforcement agency officials, like CBI or customs officials
- They **give threats of arrest** in the name of fake international parcels of banned drugs
- **Organised economic crime** operated by cross-border crime syndicates



'DIGITAL ARREST'



How Fraudsters Trick Victims and Evade Police (1/2)

- They use **studios** modelled on police stations and government offices while video-calling victims
- They wear **uniforms** to appear genuine
- They play **police sirens** in the background and send **fake IDs** to make the 'digital arrest' seem real



Image generated via AI for representational purposes

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What to do if someone contacts you and threatens you with arrest?

- **Stop all further communication** and disconnect from the internet immediately
- Report the incident to local police or cyber crime authorities by calling **1930 (24/7 helpline number)**
- Contact your bank and freeze accounts or change passwords if necessary
- **Keep evidence** like call recordings, messages, and screenshots



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How do you avoid getting trapped?

- **Never trust unsolicited calls** claiming to be from law enforcement agencies
- **Verify caller's identity** by contacting the agency directly through official numbers
- Do not share personal details like ID, bank, or passport information over video calls
- Install a **reliable cybersecurity app** to alert you of potential scams



'DIGITAL ARREST'



Steps to take if you're already a victim and have lost money

- Immediately report the transaction to your bank and request a reversal or freeze
- File a formal complaint with the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (cybercrime.gov.in)
- Seek help from a lawyer to assist in legal matters and protect your identity
- Gather all evidence for the authorities, including call logs, messages, and transaction details





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