

CYBERCRIMES IN INDIA

Digital Arrest

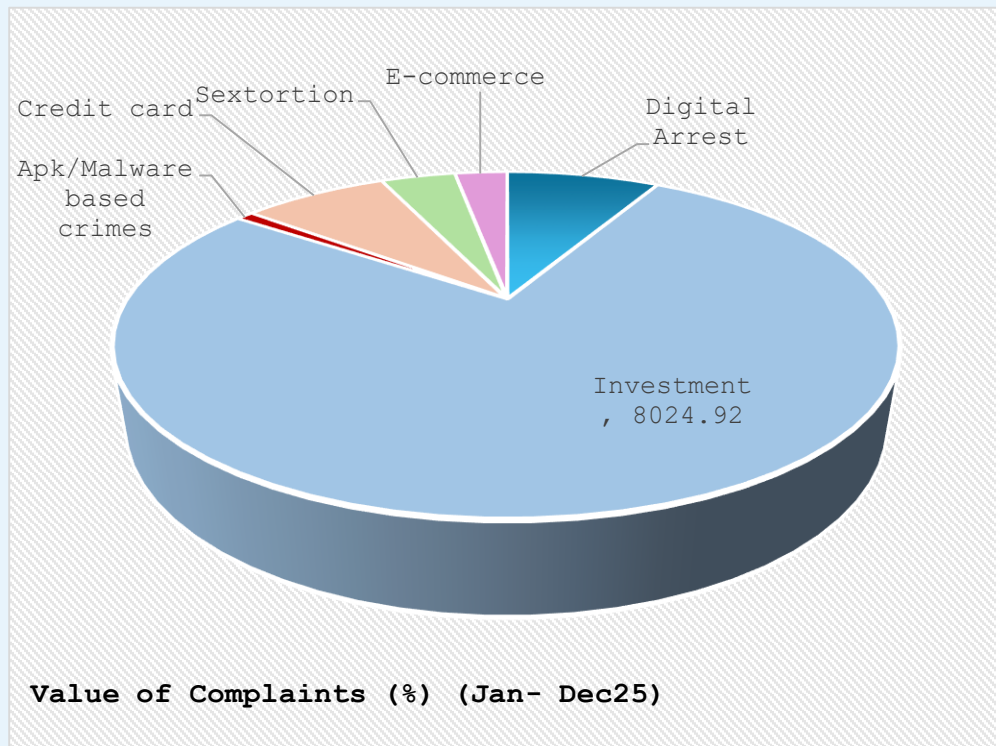


Sampat Meena, IPS

Special Director, CBI

Prominent Cybercrime Categories

Top fraud types reported on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal- 2025 - Composition



Financial Fraud

UPI fraud, fake payment links, e-wallet theft

Investment Scams

Pig-butchering, fake trading apps, Ponzi schemes

Digital Arrest

Fake CBI/police video calls demanding ransom

Job Fraud (Cyber slavery)

Fake part-time jobs, task-based scams via Telegram

Digital Arrest: An Intensive Psychological Manipulation

Digital Arrest is a scam where criminals impersonate CBI, Narcotics Control Bureau, ED, TRAI, or Police officers via video calls, falsely accuse victims of serious crimes, and demand money to 'settle' the case — keeping victims under 'digital custody' for hours or days.



- **Fake Authority**
- **Manufactured Urgency**
- **Fake Proof**
- **Fear & Shame**
- **The Trap of Small Steps**
- **Acting Like the Real Thing**

How the Trap Is Set — 3 Stages of a Digital Arrest Scam

01

Establishing the Authority

The Bait

WHAT HAPPENS

Impersonation of Authority like CBI, ED.

WHY IT WORKS

Deep Cultural Respect for Govt. Authorities.

"Saab ne bulaya hai" — the fear of official summons runs deep across all social classes

02

Instilling Fear

The Squeeze

WHAT HAPPENS

Accusation of involvement in offence.

WHY IT WORKS

Fear due to associated social stigma
Prevents from discussing with family members.

*Social stigma in India is a weapon: 'Log kya kahenge?'
(What will people say?) is used against you*

03

Extortion Phase

The Lock-In

WHAT HAPPENS

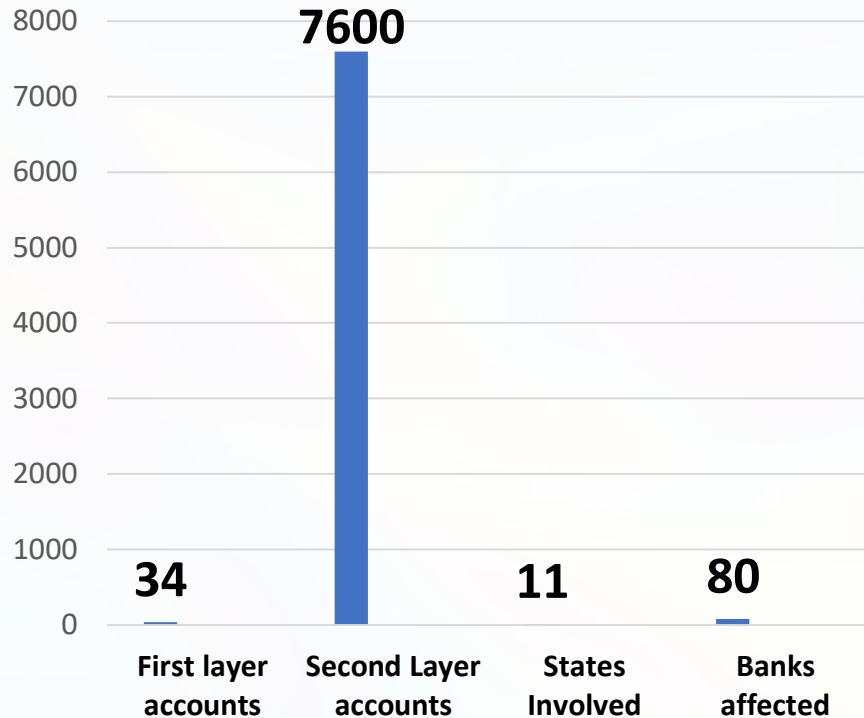
Funds taken in the name of audit in RBI Account
with promise of return.

WHY IT WORKS

Use of Mule Accounts for fund collection, does not
lead to fraudsters.

Scammers use organized Mule Account as a Service.

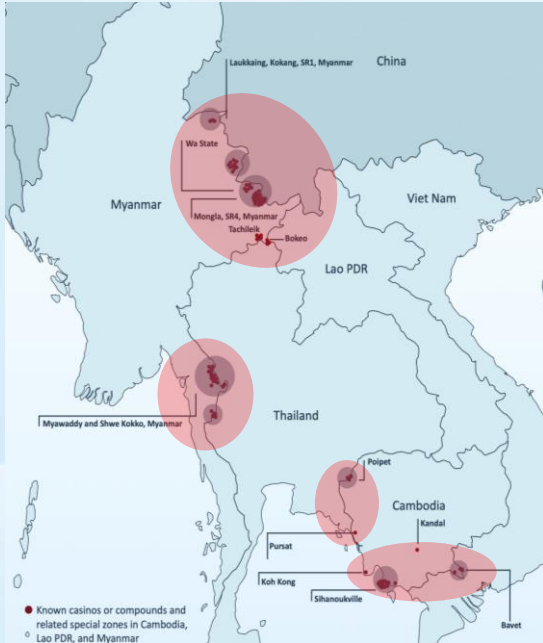
Investigative Challenges: Navigating Complexities, A Case Study



Key Findings

- **Rs. 102 Crore** (including Rs. 7.67 Cr) transferred through 34 first-layer accounts across 11 states
- **Immediate dispersion** to 7,600 accounts, each transaction under Rs. 5 lakh to avoid detection
- Second layer accounts spread over **80 Banks**
- **Cash withdrawals** via ATMs and cheques; remaining funds routed abroad
- **International access** from Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Taiwan, Indonesia, plus 8 Indian cities
- **Same accounts accessed** from multiple geographic locations simultaneously

Role of Scam Compounds in Digital Arrest



- Digital Arrests are Transnational Organized Cyber Crimes, as geolocation of IP Addresses identified during investigation suggests
- Criminals need geographical distance to go out of reach of Police, but they need Human Resource, who can talk in language and style of targeted victim
- Job Seeker youths are recruited through various online platforms, trafficked to Scam Compounds and forced into Cyber Crimes

Combating Cybercrimes: Way Forward

- Requires spreading awareness, specially among vulnerable population
- Hon'ble Supreme Court has taken suo moto cognizance and monitoring the steps being taken by the stakeholders
- Inter-departmental Committee at Ministry of Home Affairs has been constituted, which includes stakeholders including CBI, RBI, DoT, MEA and others
- The Committee meets fortnightly to discuss the challenges, solutions and monitors the implementation

THE IMPERATIVE

**"Cybercrime is not a future threat,
it is today's organised crime."**

Cyber fraud is going to stay

Arrests alone are not success

Approach shift from case disposal to
ecosystem disruption

Thank You