



# Digital Arrest Scams

[Source: TOI](#)

## Why in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued a warning about an increase in '**digital arrest**' scams, where [cybercriminals](#) impersonate government officials to extort money from unsuspecting victims.

- The [Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre \(I4C\)](#), in collaboration with Microsoft, is actively combating this organised online economic crime.

## What are Digital Arrest Scams?

- **Cybercriminal Impersonation:** Scammers pose as personnel from various government agencies, including the police, [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#), [Narcotics Department](#), [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#), or [Enforcement Directorate](#).
- **Intimidation Tactics:** Victims receive calls alleging their **involvement in illegal activities**, such as sending or receiving contraband items like drugs or fake passports.
  - Claims may also involve a loved one supposedly caught in criminal activities or accidents, with the fraudsters demanding money to resolve the 'case'.
- **Digital Confinement:** Some victims are subjected to 'digital arrest,' where they are forced to stay on video calls with the scammers until their demands are met.
- **Demands for Money:** Criminals are **extorting money in exchange** for agreeing not to expose the false legal cases that have been constructed.

## What are the Steps Being Taken to Combat These Scams?

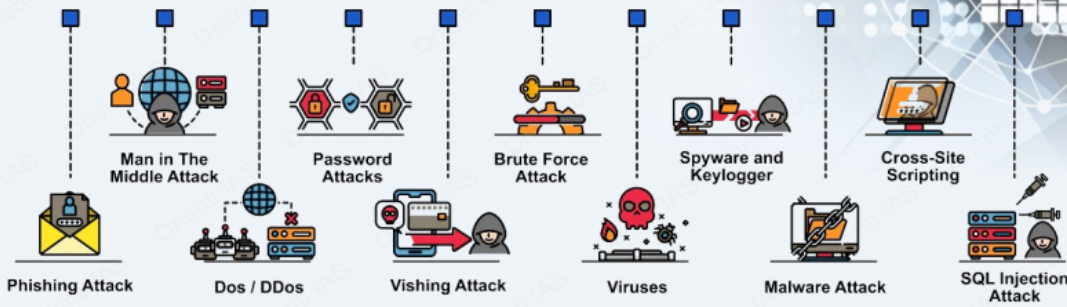
- **Blocking Fraudulent Accounts:** The I4C, has blocked over 1,000 Skype accounts linked to intimidation, blackmail, extortion, and "digital arrests" of citizens by cybercriminals posing as government personnel.
  - I4C is also facilitating the blocking of SIM cards, mobile devices, and mule accounts used by these fraudsters.
- **Cross-Border Crime Syndicates:** The MHA has identified that these scams are operated by cross-border crime syndicates, making them part of a larger, organised online economic crime network.
- **Alerts and Awareness:** I4C has issued various alerts regarding such frauds on its social media **platform "cyberdost,"** and other platforms.
  - If someone receives such a call, they should immediately report the incident on the **cybercrime helpline number** or the website **"National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal"** for assistance.

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# CYBER SECURITY

Cybersecurity refers to any technology, measure, or practice for preventing cyberattacks or mitigating their impact.

## CYBER SECURITY ATTACKS



'Crime in India' Report 2022 (NCRB) highlighted 24.4% surge in cybercrimes in India since 2021.

## Common Cybersecurity Myths

- Strong passwords alone are adequate protection
- Major cybersecurity risks are well-known
- All cyberattack vectors are contained
- Cybercriminals don't attack small businesses

## Cyber Warfare

- Digital attacks to disrupt vital computer systems, to inflict damage, death, and destruction.

## CYBER THREAT ACTORS

CYBER THREAT ACTOR	MOTIVATION
NATION-STATES	GEOPOLITICAL
CYBERCRIMINALS	PROFIT
HACKTIVISTS	IDEOLOGICAL
TERRORIST GROUPS	IDEOLOGICAL VIOLENCE
THRILL-SEEKERS	SATISFACTION
INSIDER THREATS	DISCONTENT

## Types of Cybersecurity

- Critical infrastructure security (Robust access controls)
- Network security (Deploying firewalls)
- Application security (Code reviews)
- Cloud Security (Tokenization)
- Information security (Data masking)

## Recent Major Cyber Attacks

- WannaCry Ransomware Attack (2017)
- Cambridge Analytica Data Breach (2018)
- Financial data of 9M+ cardholders, including SBI, leaked (2022)

## Regulations & Initiatives

- International:**
  - UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace
  - NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE)
  - Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, 2001 (India not a signatory)
- India:**
  - IT Act, 2000 (Sections 43, 66, 66B, 66C, 66D)
  - National Cyber Security Policy, 2013
  - National Cyber Security Strategy 2020
  - Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative
  - Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)
  - Computer Emergency Response Team-India (CERT-In)

## Steps Needed for Cyber Security

- Network Security
- Malware Protection
- Incident Management
- User Education and Awareness
- Secure Configuration
- Managing User Privileges
- Information Risk Management Regime



## Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)

- It was established by MHA, in New Delhi to provide a framework and eco-system for **Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) for dealing with Cybercrime** in a coordinated and

comprehensive manner.

- I4C is envisaged to act as the **nodal point to curb Cybercrime in the country.**
- It proposes **amendments to cyber laws to keep up with rapidly evolving technologies** and international cooperation.
- Coordinate implementation of **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT)** with other countries for cybercrimes in consultation with the relevant authority in MHA.
  - MLAT is a bilateral agreement between two or more countries that allows for the exchange of information and evidence to enforce criminal or public laws.

## VERTICALS OF I4C



Read more: [India's Cybersecurity Challenge: Threats and Strategies](#)

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q. In India, under cyber insurance for individuals, which of the following benefits are generally covered, in addition to payment for the loss of funds and other benefits? (2020)**

1. Cost of restoration of the computer system in case of malware disrupting access to one's computer
2. Cost of a new computer if some miscreant wilfully damages it, if proved so
3. Cost of hiring a specialised consultant to minimise the loss in case of cyber extortion
4. Cost of defence in the Court of Law if any third party files a suit

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? (2017)**

1. Service providers
2. Data centres
3. Body corporate

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/digital-arrest-scams>

