

Digital Arrest Scams: ED Charge Sheet & I4C Advisory to Protect Citizens

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What's in today's article?

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- What is Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)?
- What are Digital Arrest Scams?
- ED files charge sheet in digital arrest scams

Why in News?

The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** recently filed a prosecution complaint under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against eight individuals involved in cyber scams. These accused allegedly defrauded people via fake IPOs and stock investments, primarily using social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram.

Also, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has issued a new advisory warning against digital arrests.

What is Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)?

- **About**

- **I4C** is an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs to deal with cyber crime in the country in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.
- I4C focuses on tackling all the issues related to Cybercrime for the citizens, which includes:
 - improving coordination between various Law Enforcement Agencies and the stakeholders,
 - driving change in India's overall capability to tackle Cybercrime.
- The I4C was dedicated to the Nation in January 2020.

- **Objectives of I4C**

- To act as a nodal point to curb Cybercrime in the country.
- To strengthen the fight against Cybercrime committed against women and children.
- Facilitate easy filing Cybercrime related complaints and identifying Cybercrime trends and patterns.
- To act as an early warning system for Law Enforcement Agencies for proactive Cybercrime prevention and detection.
- Awareness creation among public about preventing Cybercrime.

- **Major initiatives**

- Launched **www.cybercrime.gov.in** – the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) which allows 24X7 reporting of all types of Cybercrime
- The **Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System** has been launched for immediate reporting of financial cyber frauds
- National Toll- free Helpline number '**1930**' has been operationalized to provide citizen assistance in lodging online cyber complaints.
- The National Cyber Forensic Laboratory (NCFL), a 'State of the Art' facility has been set up to **train and assist the State/UT Investigation Officers**

- **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)** platform called '**CyTrain**' portal “ <https://cytrain.ncrb.gov.in> ” has been developed.

- CyTrain portal helps in the capacity building of Police Officers/Judicial Officers through online courses on critical aspects of Cybercrime investigation, forensics and prosecution and also gives completion certificates.

- Launched **CyberDost** handle on various social media platforms to generate **cyber awareness** among citizens

What are Digital Arrest Scams?

- **About**

- A digital arrest scam is a type of online fraud in which scammers deceive victims by impersonating law enforcement officials.
- These fraudsters falsely accuse victims of criminal activities, use intimidation tactics, and demand money under the pretense of legal consequences.
- Victims are pressured into making payments to avoid supposed arrests.

- **Working**

- In this scam, perpetrators pretend to be officials from agencies like the CBI, Income Tax Department, or Customs.
- They initiate contact with victims through phone calls, then switch to video calls on platforms like WhatsApp or Skype to add a sense of legitimacy.
- Scammers use tactics like showing a police station set-up or threatening arrest warrants, accusing victims of financial or legal violations.
- They demand payments under the pretense of “clearing the victim’s name” or as “security deposits” for investigations.
- Once the money is transferred, the scammers disappear, leaving victims with financial losses.

ED files charge sheet in digital arrest scams

• About the news

- Following PM Modi’s recent appeal for vigilance against the threat of “digital” arrests, investigative agencies have announced active measures to combat this growing form of cybercrime.
- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) recently submitted a charge sheet related to one such scam, while the I4C has issued a new advisory.

• PM Modi’s Warning on Digital Arrest Scams

- In his October ‘Mann Ki Baat’ address, PM Modi alerted citizens about scammers posing as law enforcement, conducting ‘digital arrests’ to extort funds from victims.
- He advised people to “stop, think, and take action” to safeguard themselves.

• ED’s Investigation and Charge Sheet Filing

- ED recently filed a prosecution complaint under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against eight individuals involved in cyber scams.
- These accused allegedly defrauded people via fake IPOs and stock investments, primarily using social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram.
 - Known as **‘pig-butchering’ scams**, stock market investment scams entice victims with promises of high returns.
 - They use fake websites and misleading WhatsApp groups that appear connected to reputable financial firms.
- The ED detailed how fraudsters disguised themselves as officials from Customs or the CBI, falsely accusing victims of legal violations to intimidate them into transferring large sums.
 - Funds from victims were funneled through “mule” accounts, converted to cryptocurrency, and transferred abroad.
 - Key accused individuals recruited directors for shell companies and facilitated bank account openings, knowingly assisting in money laundering.
- Victims were manipulated through “digital arrests” under the guise of a fake “fund regularisation process.”

• I4C Advisory to Citizens

- I4C issued a public advisory warning against digital arrest scams.
- It reminded citizens that legitimate officials do not make demands over video calls and urged people to report suspicious activity via the national cybercrime helpline (1930) or the cybercrime portal.

Q.1. What is a digital arrest scam?

A digital arrest scam is an online fraud where scammers pose as law enforcement officials to intimidate victims and demand payments. They falsely accuse victims of crimes to extract funds.

Q.2. How can you protect yourself from digital arrest scams?

Stay alert to fake calls claiming legal trouble. Law enforcement will not ask for payments on video calls. Report any suspicious activity to the cybercrime helpline (1930) or cybercrime.gov.in.

News: [Digital arrests: ED files charge sheet, I4C issues fresh advisory](#)

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