

India

Population 1463.9 million · Latest figures: 2025

India's national cybercrime portal recorded 2.4 million complaints of financial fraud in 2025, a quarter more than in 2024, with Rs 224.95 billion (22,495 crore) reported lost. Complaints have grown ninefold since 2021 and the money fortyfold, from Rs 5.5 billion. The money stopped rising in 2025: it was 1.5% below the Rs 228.5 billion of 2024. Police registered 29,758 cyber fraud cases in 2024.

Policing belongs to the states, so the central government works through shared systems. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), an office of the Ministry of Home Affairs, runs the reporting portal, the 1930 helpline, the system through which police have banks hold stolen money, and a registry of suspect accounts. At its Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre, staff of major banks, payment firms, phone companies and platforms work beside state police. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sets the rules for banks, the telecoms department runs the Sanchar Saathi service and cuts off numbers, and the regulator TRAI governs spam. The criminal law is the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, in force since July 2024, with the Information Technology Act.

New since 2025 are telecom cyber security rules for firms that identify customers by phone number (October 2025), a national procedure for holding and returning money (January 2026), and RBI rules that from January 2027 compensate victims of small frauds.



PEOPLE SCAMMED

119,915,836

11.6% of adults

Senior citizens made 103,488 of the fraud complaints in 2025, 4% of the total, but reported Rs 40 billion lost, 18% of the money: about Rs 387,000 each, four times the average. Women made 463,114 complaints and reported Rs 37.6 billion lost. The states with most complaints are Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, about 300,000 each in 2024, followed by Karnataka, Gujarat, Delhi and Tamil Nadu.

Scammers reach people by phone call, SMS and WhatsApp, through advertisements on social media and through fake loan and trading apps. Typical messages say a bank account's identity check has expired or a traffic fine is due, and carry a link or ask the victim to install an app. Calls from abroad were disguised as Indian mobile numbers until the telecoms department began blocking them in October 2024: it stopped 13.5 million such calls in a day and says they have fallen by nearly 99%.

Part of the fraud is run from scam compounds in Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos, where Indians lured by fake job offers are made to work: 4,315 were rescued from the three countries in 2025 and 6,998 since 2022. At home, the government's joint police teams are placed at the known centres, among them Mewat, south of Delhi, and Jamtara in Jharkhand. The Home Ministry says criminals now also use AI and deepfakes.

PEOPLE WHO LOST
MONEY

78,565,498

66% of victims

The largest sums leave by bank transfer. Investment and 'digital arrest' scams have the victim send savings to a chain of accounts, and the average complaint on the portal is about Rs 94,000. Small frauds run through UPI, the instant payment system: banks reported 1.63 million UPI fraud incidents worth Rs 12.3 billion in the year to March 2026, about Rs 7,500 each.

The money lands in mule accounts. Banks have reported 3 million suspect identifiers to I4C's Suspect Registry, opened in September 2024, and I4C has shared 3.2 million first-layer mule accounts with them. The RBI's MuleHunter.AI tool, which scores accounts for risk, is used by 29 banks.

What stops a payment is speed. A report to 1930 or the portal goes straight into a system linked to the banks, and police can have a hold placed on the money before it moves on. UPI has device binding, a PIN, daily limits and cooling-off periods. The telecoms department scores phone numbers for fraud risk so that banks and payment apps can warn, delay or decline a payment: it says this has prevented over Rs 14 billion of fraud since May 2025. On police request 1.58 million SIM cards and 577,000 handsets had been blocked by June 2026, and 8.8 million connections taken out under false identities have been cut off. I4C has had more than 277,000 fraudulent apps, sites, links and accounts blocked.

MONEY LOST

US\$4.28b

₹372.69b in a year,
0.11% of GDP

Complaints to the national cybercrime reporting portal put money lost to financial fraud at Rs 224.95 billion in 2025, from 2.4 million complaints, against Rs 228.5 billion in 2024 and Rs 5.5 billion in 2021. Complaints rose by a quarter in 2025 while the amount held level. The amount is what complainants say they lost, not a checked figure, and it covers only frauds reported to the portal.

Investment and trading scams take most of the money, about three quarters of the amount reported in 2025. Next come 'digital arrest' scams, in which fake officials keep a victim on a video call and order transfers: they drew 123,672 complaints and Rs 19.4 billion in 2024, up from Rs 3.4 billion in 2023. Older people lose far more than others: senior citizens made 103,488 complaints in 2025, 4% of the total, but reported Rs 40.1 billion, 18% of the money.

Small frauds are far more numerous. Banks reported 1.63 million UPI fraud incidents worth Rs 12.3 billion in the year to mid-March 2026, about Rs 7,500 each.

MONEY RETURNED

US\$182.3m

4.3% of the money
lost

Under an RBI rule of 2017 banks must refund payments the customer did not authorise, in full if reported within three working days. It does not cover a payment the victim was tricked into making, or one made after sharing a password or code. From 1 January 2027 a victim of a fraud of up to Rs 50,000 who reports to the bank and to the national cybercrime helpline or portal within five days will be paid 85% of the loss, to a maximum of Rs 25,000, once in a lifetime. Larger losses stay with the victim unless the bank was at fault.

Holds on fraudsters' accounts are rising, but little is paid out. Banks put holds on more than Rs 81.9 billion, about 15% of the Rs 550.5 billion reported lost on the portal from 2021 to 2025, and the total held reached Rs 111.6 billion by June 2026. The Home Ministry counts more than Rs 2.06 billion refunded to complainants in the three financial years to March 2026. Under a national procedure of January 2026, sums below Rs 50,000 can be returned without a court order, and an online restoration service running since April 2026 had returned Rs 180 million in 36,290 cases by August.

Larger sums need a magistrate's order, which some states handle in batches through settlement courts: Telangana returned Rs 1.83 billion that way in 2025.

REPORTED

88%

of victims reported it

In the Armidale 2026 India survey, 53.4% of victims of the last 12 months told the police and 87.9% reported to some institution, such as the police, a bank or a platform. The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal registered 2,402,579 financial fraud complaints in 2025, up 25.2% from 1,918,835 in 2024, with Rs 224.95 billion reported lost. Complaints reach it online or through the national cyber fraud helpline, which handled 32.4 million calls in 2025, about 89,000 a day, against 26,411 a day in 2023.

The portal's fraud system is linked to the banks, which hold the money while a complaint is checked: by the end of 2025 more than Rs 81.89 billion had been saved in more than 2.36 million complaints. Complaints pass to the police of the victim's state, who decide whether to open a case: 195,760 cases were registered on 6.59 million complaints from 2021 to 2025, about 3%. In 18 states and union territories a complaint above a set loss now becomes a police case automatically, more than 12,000 so far.

The RBI Ombudsman received 1.33 million banking complaints in the year to March 2025, up 13.6% from 1.18 million. Citizens had sent 1.18 million reports of suspected fraud calls and messages to the telecoms department's Sanchar Saathi by August 2026, which led to 5.23 million connections being cut. Telecom operators took 3.11 million spam complaints in 2025, up from 1.94 million, and the National Consumer Helpline registered about 147,600 complaints a month.

POLICE RECORDS

2,402,579

cases recorded by the authorities

The figure shown here is the count of financial fraud complaints on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, with the amounts complainants reported lost: 2,402,579 complaints and Rs 224.95 billion in 2025. It covers card and banking fraud as well as scams, and the register is revised as complaints are checked. Police case figures come from the National Crime Records Bureau, which counts cases formally registered.

In 2024 police registered 101,928 cyber crime cases, of which 29,758 were fraud: 4,659 online banking frauds, 3,829 card frauds and 3,044 marketing or investment frauds among them. Telangana registered 18,922 of the fraud cases, almost two thirds. Over the three years to March 2026, 181,271 police cases were registered on 5.39 million portal complaints, about 3%.

Cases are brought as cheating and cheating by personation under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, with organised crime for gangs, and as identity theft and personation under the Information Technology Act, which carry up to three years. In 2023, 886 cyber crime cases ended in conviction. Leads from I4C's mapping of suspects had produced 29,837 arrests by June 2026. The Enforcement Directorate has taken up 257 cybercrime cases and identified Rs 359 billion as proceeds of crime. The Central Bureau of Investigation is investigating digital arrest scams nationwide on the Supreme Court's order, and had registered 10 cases by August 2026.

Victims who told the police (estimated)



Cases recorded by the authorities



MOST COMMON

1. Online shopping
2. Prizes
3. Investment

By money, investment scams dominate: about three quarters of the amount reported lost in 2025, on I4C figures reported in the press, and 35% of complaints. An advertisement or message draws the victim into a WhatsApp or Telegram group run by a supposed analyst, then onto a look-alike trading app that shows invented profits. The victim pays in by bank transfer and is asked for fees or tax on trying to withdraw.

Digital arrest comes second by money, at 8% to 9%. A caller posing as police, customs or a court, usually on video, says a parcel or account in the victim's name is tied to a crime, keeps the victim on camera for hours or days and has them transfer savings 'for verification'. The portal recorded 123,672 such complaints and Rs 19.4 billion lost in 2024, and 58,249 complaints in 2025.

Sextortion is 19% of complaints but 4% of the money: a video call is recorded or faked and payment demanded. Card and banking fraud, about 7% of the money, usually starts with a message that an account will be blocked unless the victim updates their identity details or installs an app. Other common forms are illegal loan apps that take a phone's contacts and extort repayment, of which the government has blocked 87, task scams that pay small sums before asking for deposits, and cloned fingerprints used to withdraw cash through the Aadhaar payment system.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

India has built extensive shared machinery, and its weakness is what happens after the money is held. Banks, payment firms, phone companies and platforms work beside police at I4C's Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre. Banks are linked to the complaint system so that holds are placed in real time. More than 1,600 organisations, including police forces, banks and payment apps, exchange suspect numbers on the telecoms department's platform. About 15% of the money reported lost from 2021 to 2025 was put on hold, and the amount held grew by more than a third in the first half of 2026. The amount reported lost fell slightly in 2025 while complaints rose by a quarter, and digital arrest complaints halved.

The results for victims are weaker. Refunds recorded by the Home Ministry are under 1% of the money reported lost. About 3% of complaints become police cases, and convictions for all cyber crime ran between 500 and 1,100 a year from 2021 to 2023. The procedure for holding and returning money is an administrative instruction, not law. No firm bears a victim's loss: the RBI's compensation from 2027 stops at Rs 25,000, and phone companies and platforms pay nothing.

A parliamentary committee in August 2025 called for a single cybercrime law, tougher penalties and liability for platforms. The Supreme Court in August 2026 ordered the RBI to set a procedure on mule accounts and asked for a shared liability and compensation scheme to be examined.

Calculation Methodology & Sources

People scammed

From one survey:

- 11.6%: Armidale, India Consumer Scam Report 2026 for the GSMA (figures computed from the respondent data), Respondent data, Q25 (12 months to 3 August 2026).
- 11.6% of 1,033,757,209 adults.

People who lost money

From one survey:

- 65.5%: Armidale, India Consumer Scam Report 2026 for the GSMA (figures computed from the respondent data), Respondent data, Q32 (12 months to 3 August 2026).

Money lost

- ₹224.95b was lost in cases recorded by the authorities. Adding the 76,162,919 victims who lost money but are not in those records, at ₹1,940 each, gives ₹372.69b.
- Price of an unrecorded loss: Read off the line fitted to GDP per person in the countries where this price is measured (Canada, Chile, Mexico, Singapore and United States): US\$22.26 = INR 1,939.83.
- US dollars at 0.011473357 per INR.
- Share of GDP: US\$4.28b against GDP of US\$3.96tn in 2025. World Bank, GDP (current US\$) 2025.

Money returned

- Vanguardia, reporting CONDUSEF, Crece la estafa digital: más de 2.4 millones de fraudes bancarios en México durante 2025, Level average, see note.
- No national figure covers every route, so the average is used for countries where the rules make banks refund only part of fraud losses. Worked out: banks return 11.4% of money lost through banks, the average of Russia and Mexico; banks returned INR 11.54bn (11.4% of the 27.2% of money lost through banks); INR 4.34bn came back on money lost outside banks (1.6%, from Armidale's non-government survey of seven Asian markets, converted to money).
- 4.3% of ₹372.69b lost.

Reported

From one survey:

- 87.9%: Armidale, India Consumer Scam Report 2026 for the GSMA (figures computed from the respondent data), Respondent data, Q33 (12 months to 3 August 2026).

Police records

- 53.4%: Armidale, India Consumer Scam Report 2026 for the GSMA (figures computed from the respondent data), Respondent data, Q33 (12 months to 3 August 2026).
- 2,402,579: Financial fraud cases recorded by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre.

Most common

- Ranked by scam types that affected victims of the last 12 months most (Armidale 2026; victims could choose more than one). 37.0% of answers are methods such as phishing, or other, and are not ranked.

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