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NCRB Crime in India 2024: Cybercrime Crosses One Lakh Cases for First Time

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NCRB Crime in India 2024: Cybercrime Crosses One Lakh Cases for First Time

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WHY IN NEWS

The **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** released *Crime in India 2024*, its annual statistical report. Overall cognizable crimes declined ~6%, but **cybercrime cases crossed 1 lakh for the first time** – reaching 1,01,928 registered cases, a 17.9% rise over 2023.

ABOUT NCRB

The **National Crime Records Bureau** is a nodal agency under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, established in **1986**. It compiles and publishes crime statistics from all states and UTs, covering:

- Cognizable crimes under IPC/BNS
- Special & Local Laws (SLL)
- Cybercrime
- Suicides
- Accidental deaths
- Prison statistics

NCRB data is the primary reference for policing, judicial, and policy decisions. The *Crime in India* report is published annually.

KEY FINDINGS – CRIME IN INDIA 2024

Overall Crime

INDICATOR	2023	2024	CHANGE
Total cognizable crimes	62.41 lakh	58.85 lakh	~-6%
Crime rate (per lakh population)	–	418.9	Lowest since 2019
Murder cases	–	–	-2.4%
Kidnapping/abduction	–	–	-15.4%
Crimes against senior citizens	–	–	+16.9%
Crimes against children	–	–	+5.9%
Suicides	–	1,70,746	–
Drug overdose deaths	–	–	+50% vs 2023

Cybercrime – The Key Surge

INDICATOR	2023	2024	CHANGE
Registered cybercrime cases	86,420	1,01,928	+17.9%
Cybercrime rate (per lakh)	6.2	7.3	–
Cases pending investigation	–	1.2 lakh	–
Cases pending trial	–	~75,000	–

Cyber fraud dominates: 72.6% of all cybercrime cases (73,987 cases) were fraud-related.

States with highest cybercrime rates: Karnataka, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh

KEY CYBERCRIME TRENDS

1. Digital Arrest Fraud

A new and rapidly growing fraud category where criminals impersonate law enforcement officers (CBI, ED, Income Tax, TRAI, Customs) via video calls and “virtually arrest” victims, coercing large payments. High psychological manipulation, targets senior citizens and affluent individuals.

2. Investment Scams (Pig Butchering)

Fraudsters build online trust over weeks (often through dating or investment apps) before inducing victims to invest in fake cryptocurrency or stock platforms. Money is siphoned once deposited.

3. OTP and SIM Swap Frauds

Fraudsters obtain OTPs by impersonating bank officials or telecom operators, enabling unauthorised transactions.

4. Low Digital Literacy

NCRB notes only **38% of Indian households** have meaningful digital literacy – creating large pools of vulnerable users.

GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) 2023

Replaced the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. Significantly updated digital evidence standards:

- Electronic records admissible as primary evidence (Section 57-58)
- Removes the “secondary evidence” classification for digital records
- Defines “electronic signature” and expands admissibility

Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

- Enacted August 2023; Rules notified November 2025
- Creates data fiduciary obligations for processing Indian citizens’ personal data
- Establishes Data Protection Board of India

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

- Under MHA; coordinates national cybercrime response
- Operates the **National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP)** – cybercrime.gov.in
- Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting: **Helpline 1930**

SENIOR CITIZEN VULNERABILITY

Crimes against senior citizens rose **16.9%** – alarmingly high relative to overall crime decline. Key categories:

- Financial fraud (pension, insurance)

- Property crime
- Digital arrest frauds
- Emotional/physical abuse

India's elderly population (60+) is projected to reach **340 million by 2050** (UN projections), making elder care and elder crime prevention a critical governance challenge.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

- Cybersecurity governance in India
- Law enforcement capacity building
- I4C, NCRP, Helpline 1930

GS Paper 2 – Polity and Governance

- NCRB's role and data quality
- BSA 2023 changes to digital evidence
- DPDP Act 2023

GS Paper 1 – Society

- Elder vulnerability and crime
- Drug abuse trends (50% rise in drug overdose deaths)
- Social dimensions of cybercrime

Mains Angles

- ❶ Critically assess India's cybercrime governance architecture. What reforms would make it more effective?
- ❷ "Rising cybercrime is the price of rapid digital inclusion without proportionate digital literacy." Examine.
- ❸ Evaluate the adequacy of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023 in addressing digital evidence challenges.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NCRB: EST. 1986; UNDER MHA; PUBLISHES *CRIME IN INDIA* ANNUALLY.

CRIME IN INDIA 2024 – KEY NUMBERS:

Total cognizable crimes: 58.85 lakh (~-6% from 62.41 lakh in 2023)

Cybercrime: 1,01,928 cases (first time >1 lakh) – +17.9% over 2023

Cyber fraud: 72.6% of cybercrime cases

Crime rate: 418.9/lakh population (lowest since 2019)

Suicides: 1,70,746

Drug overdose deaths: +50% YoY

Crimes against senior citizens: +16.9%

States – highest cybercrime rate: Karnataka, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh

I4C Helpline: 1930 (cyber financial fraud)

NCRP: cybercrime.gov.in

Digital literacy: only 38% of Indian households (NCRB)

BSA 2023: replaced Indian Evidence Act 1872 – upgraded digital evidence standards

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