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Operation Chakra-VI: CBI Targets Digital-Arrest Cyber Fraud

25 June 2026

SECURITY & DEFENCE

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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Operation Chakra-VI: CBI Targets Digital-Arrest Cyber Fraud

25 June 2026 · 7 min read ·

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WHY IN NEWS

On June 25, 2026, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) launched , conducting coordinated searches at **over 80 locations across 16 states with 60 special teams**, dismantling an organised cybercrime syndicate linked to **more than 200 “digital arrest” fraud cases**. Two persons were arrested and a fake website mimicking the **Supreme Court of India** was unearthed, spotlighting the surging menace of a scam that has **no legal basis whatsoever in Indian law**.

WHAT HAPPENED: OPERATION CHAKRA-VI

The CBI’s anti-cybercrime wing executed one of its largest single-day crackdowns on the “digital arrest” racket. Investigators traced an organised network that impersonated central agencies and the judiciary to extort citizens, then laundered the proceeds through shell companies and **mule bank accounts**.

The two arrested accused, **B. Naresh (Chennai)** and **Sanjib Saha (Kolkata)**, allegedly floated shell companies and operated mule accounts that routed nearly **Rs 2 crore** of suspected crime proceeds. The syndicate ran a **counterfeit website resembling the Supreme Court of India** and uploaded forged court orders and fake law-enforcement documents to lend its threats a veneer of authenticity. Mobile phones, laptops, digital devices and financial records were seized for forensic examination, and the CBI flagged that the network may have targeted victims **outside India**, prompting information-sharing with foreign law-enforcement agencies.

Operation Chakra-VI: Key Facts at a Glance

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PARAMETER	DETAIL
Operation	Operation Chakra-VI (CBI flagship anti-cybercrime drive)
Date	June 25, 2026
Search locations	80+
States covered	16 (incl. Punjab, Gujarat, Delhi, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, UP, MP, Rajasthan, Assam, West Bengal, Manipur, Karnataka, Odisha)
Special teams	60
Cases linked	200+ digital-arrest fraud cases
Arrests	2 (Chennai and Kolkata)
Money routed	~Rs 2 crore via shell companies and mule accounts
Signature deception	Fake website mimicking the Supreme Court of India; forged court orders
Transnational angle	Possible foreign victims; cross-border info-sharing initiated

WHAT IS A “DIGITAL ARREST”?

“Digital arrest” is a **fraud, not a legal procedure**. There is **no provision for any virtual, video-call or online arrest anywhere in Indian law**, including the newly enacted **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** (<https://ujjiyari.com/legislation/bharatiya-nyaya-sanhita-2023/>) (**BNS**). No genuine government agency, police force, CBI, ED or court ever conducts an arrest or interrogation over a phone or video call, nor demands money to “settle” a case.

Modus Operandi

The scam follows a deliberately engineered script of fear and isolation:

- 1 The hook:** The victim receives a call or video call claiming a parcel in their name contains contraband (drugs, fake passports), or that their Aadhaar/bank account is linked to money-laundering.
- 2 The impersonation:** Fraudsters appear on video in fake police, CBI or ED uniforms, against staged “police-station” backdrops, often citing forged FIRs, arrest warrants or court orders bearing official-looking insignia.

- 3 **The “digital arrest”:** The victim is told they are under “digital arrest” and must stay on the video call around the clock, cut off from family, lawyers and outside help.
- 4 **The extortion:** Under sustained psychological pressure, the victim is coerced into transferring money for “verification” or “bail” into accounts that are quickly emptied through mule-account layering.

The crime engages provisions on **cheating, impersonation of a public servant and criminal intimidation under the BNS, 2023**, alongside computer-related offences under the **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000**.

INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

PILLAR	DESCRIPTION
I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre)	An attached office under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) , set up to tackle all cybercrimes in a coordinated, comprehensive manner; nodal body for awareness and inter-agency action.
National Cyber-Crime Helpline 1930	Toll-free number for immediate reporting of financial cyber fraud; enables rapid freezing of fraud-linked accounts to recover money.
CFCFRMS	Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System, launched under I4C in 2021, links banks, wallets and police for real-time fraud reporting and fund-flow tracking.
cybercrime.gov.in (http://cybercrime.gov.in)	National portal for filing cybercrime complaints online, including financial fraud and content-related offences.
IT Act, 2000	Governs computer-related offences, identity theft, cheating by personation using computer resources and data tampering.
BNS, 2023	Penal (https://ujijari.com/vocab/penal/) provisions on cheating, impersonating a public servant, forgery and criminal intimidation applied to digital-arrest fraud.

To curb the abuse of communication platforms, I4C has proactively blocked **more than 3,900 Skype IDs and over 83,000 WhatsApp accounts** used in digital-arrest operations. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has personally cautioned citizens against the scam in his **Mann Ki Baat** address, advising the public mantra: **“Stop, Think, Take Action.”**

The Operation Chakra Series

“Operation Chakra” is the **CBI’s flagship anti-cybercrime initiative**, run in successive phases in partnership with national and international agencies (including Interpol, the FBI and counterparts in other countries) to dismantle transnational cyber-enabled financial-crime networks, tech-support scams and call-

centre frauds targeting Indian and foreign victims. Operation Chakra-VI is the latest iteration, focused squarely on the digital-arrest ecosystem.

The Scale of Cyber Fraud in India

Cyber-enabled financial fraud has become one of India's fastest-growing internal-security threats. Digital-arrest scams alone have inflicted losses running into hundreds of crores, with victims spanning retirees, professionals and senior citizens. The combination of cheap deepfake-grade video tools, leaked personal data, fly-by-night mule accounts and cross-border call centres makes attribution and recovery exceptionally hard, which is why enforcement now hinges on rapid account-freezing (the 1930/CFCFRMS pipeline) rather than post-facto investigation alone.

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

- **Choke the mule-account pipeline:** Digital-arrest money is laundered through layers of mule accounts opened with stolen or rented KYC. Tighter **bank KYC re-verification, AI-based anomaly detection on sudden high-velocity transfers, and faster account-freezing** under the CFCFRMS are the single most effective deterrent.
- **Treat it as transnational organised crime:** Call centres, SIM banks and crypto off-ramps frequently sit abroad. Sustained **Interpol channels, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) and 24x7 cyber liaison** are essential, as the CBI's cross-border information-sharing in this case signals.
- **Public awareness as first defence:** Since the scam weaponises fear and ignorance of due process, mass campaigns must drill one fact home: **no arrest happens over video call, and no agency demands money to "clear" a case.** Report on **1930** or **cybercrime.gov.in** (<http://cybercrime.gov.in>) and disconnect.
- **Platform accountability:** Telecom and messaging platforms must accelerate takedown of spoofed numbers and fake IDs, and verify caller identity to **blunt** (<https://ujjayanti.com/vocab/blunt/>) impersonation at source.
- **Capacity and forensics:** Strengthening state cyber cells, digital-forensic labs and trained cyber-prosecutors is critical to convert raids into convictions.

UPSC RELEVANCE

- **GS Paper 3 (Internal Security):** Cybercrime, money-laundering through mule accounts, role of CBI and I4C, and challenges of policing transnational cyber-enabled financial crime.
- **GS Paper 2 (Polity & Governance):** Functioning and jurisdiction of the **CBI**; coordinating institutions like **I4C under the MHA**; citizen-grievance redressal mechanisms (helpline 1930, CFCFRMS, cybercrime.gov.in (<http://cybercrime.gov.in>)).

- **GS Paper 2 / GS Paper 4:** Protection of vulnerable citizens (senior citizens) from fraud; ethics of misinformation and erosion of public trust in institutions
- **Prelims:** Operation Chakra series, I4C parent ministry, the 1930 helpline, CFCFRMS launch year (2021), legal status of “digital arrest”, governing statutes (IT Act 2000, BNS 2023).
- **Mains angle:** “Digital arrest scams exploit the gap between technological reach and citizen awareness of due process. Examine the institutional response and suggest a way forward.”

FACTS CORNER

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Operation Chakra-VI: CBI’s June 25, 2026 crackdown on the digital-arrest fraud network; part of the CBI’s flagship “Operation Chakra” anti-cybercrime series.

Scale: 80+ search locations across 16 states, executed by 60 special teams; linked to 200+ digital-arrest cases; 2 arrested (Chennai, Kolkata); ~Rs 2 crore routed via shell companies and mule accounts; fake Supreme Court of India website used.

I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre): Attached office under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA); nodal body for tackling cybercrime in a coordinated manner.

National Cyber-Crime Helpline 1930: Toll-free number for immediate reporting of financial cyber fraud, enabling rapid freezing of fraud-linked accounts.

CFCFRMS: Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System, launched under I4C in 2021.

“Digital arrest” has NO legal basis: No provision for virtual/video-call arrest exists in Indian law, including the BNS, 2023. Report fraud on 1930 or cybercrime.gov.in (<http://cybercrime.gov.in>).

Sources: Central Bureau of Investigation (<https://cbi.gov.in>), Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (<https://i4c.mha.gov.in>), Press Information Bureau (<https://pib.gov.in>)

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