



CYBER CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Gujarat Police

CYBER SLAVERY

The Crime Hidden Behind a Screen

■ *Recognise it. Resist it. Report it.*



A Public Awareness Guide

Cyber Crime Helpline: 1930 | cybercrime.gov.in

What Is Cyber Slavery?

Cyber slavery — also called scam-centre slavery or cyber trafficking — is a modern form of forced labour in which victims are trafficked to foreign countries under false promises of legitimate employment, then imprisoned in compounds and coerced into committing online fraud: romance scams, investment fraud, cryptocurrency schemes, and digital-arrest calls. The victims are themselves crime victims, not willing criminals.

These operations are controlled by transnational criminal organisations operating in compounds across Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and the Philippines. Victims — including many Indian nationals — are stripped of their passports, physically confined, and subjected to violence to force compliance. Because victims interact with the outside world through phones and computers, detection is extremely difficult.

The single most important fact:

Cyber slavery is **not** a voluntary career choice — it is a crime *against* the victim. If you receive an unsolicited job offer via WhatsApp or Telegram promising a high salary abroad — stop. Call **1930** before taking any action.

The Scale of the Problem

5,000+ Indians estimated trapped in cyber slavery compounds (MEA, 2024)	\$64 Bn Global annual losses to scams run from cyber compounds	1930 Report cyber crime 24x7 All India, toll-free
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The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that over 220,000 people in Myanmar and Cambodia alone are held against their will in cyber scam compounds. India has been one of the most-affected source countries, with victims lured through fake advertisements on Telegram, WhatsApp, and social media platforms promising data-entry or IT support roles abroad.



How Victims Are Trapped

Cyber slavery operations follow a recognisable pipeline from recruitment to enslavement. Understanding each stage can help you — or someone you know — avoid the trap before it closes:

1**The False Job Offer**

A polished advertisement appears on Telegram, Instagram, LinkedIn, or WhatsApp offering a 'data entry', 'customer support', or 'digital marketing' role in Thailand, Cambodia, or Dubai — with salaries of ₹1–3 lakh per month, free accommodation, and visa assistance. The recruiter contacts the victim directly and builds rapport over days or weeks.

2**Travel & Handover**

The victim is given an air ticket and told an agent will meet them at the destination airport. On arrival the agent confiscates the passport 'for visa processing' and drives the victim to a remote compound — often across a border into an area with no legal oversight.

3**Confinement Begins**

Inside the compound, victims find hundreds of other trafficked individuals from India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Kenya, and beyond. Guards patrol the perimeter. Phone calls home are controlled or banned. Victims are told they owe a 'debt' for their recruitment, accommodation, and travel — repayable only by working as a scammer.

4**Forced Scam Operations**

Victims are assigned desks, computers, and scripts. They are ordered to run romance scams, investment fraud (pig-butcher), and digital-arrest calls — targeting people in India, the US, UK, and Europe. Those who refuse or underperform are beaten, sold to other compounds, or threatened with harm to their families.

5**Rescue or Escape**

Some victims secretly contact family or the Indian Embassy. India has coordinated rescue operations with local authorities. If you suspect someone is trapped, contact the MEA Emergency Helpline: **+91-11-2301-2113** and Cyber Crime Helpline **1930** immediately.



What To Do: Before You Go & If You Are Trapped

✓ DO THIS

- ✓ Research any foreign employer independently — search the company name with 'scam' and verify with the Indian Embassy in that country.
- ✓ Verify the recruitment agency at **emigrate.gov.in** — only MEA-registered agents are legal for overseas placement.
- ✓ Never surrender your passport or Aadhaar to anyone before or after travel.
- ✓ Tell a trusted family member the company name, full location, and recruiter's contact before departure.
- ✓ If already trapped: memorise MEA Helpline **+91-11-2301-2113** and call when it is safe.
- ✓ If already trapped: contact the Indian Embassy — India has embassies in Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos.
- ✓ Send a distress message to family with your exact location, even a partial address or landmark.
- ✓ Report to **1930** and cybercrime.gov.in if you believe someone is being recruited into cyber slavery.

✗ NEVER DO THIS

- ✗ Never travel for a job you only heard about via WhatsApp, Telegram, or Instagram DM.
- ✗ Never hand over your passport — you have the right to hold your own travel documents at all times.
- ✗ Never sign a contract you have not read, or one written only in a foreign language.
- ✗ Never pay a 'processing fee' or 'security deposit' to a recruiter — legitimate employers do not charge workers.
- ✗ Never keep a suspicious job offer secret from your family — traffickers rely on isolation.
- ✗ Never assume you cannot be helped once trapped. Rescues happen. Embassies and police can reach you.

Remember:

A legitimate overseas employer **never** confiscates passports, charges recruitment fees, or keeps workers against their will. If any of these things happen, you are a victim of a crime — not an employee who has broken a contract. Indian law and international conventions fully protect you.



How to Report — Step by Step

1930

Toll-free | 24x7 | All India

The Reporting Process

1**Dial 1930 or MEA Helpline**

Report your suspicion that someone has been trafficked for cyber slavery. Provide the victim's name, last known location, recruiter's contact details, and any job offer messages or screenshots you have saved.

2**Contact the Indian Embassy**

If the victim is already abroad, contact the Indian Embassy in that country. India has embassies in Bangkok (Thailand), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Yangon (Myanmar), and Vientiane (Laos). The consular division can coordinate rescue with local police.

3**File at cybercrime.gov.in**

Log in and file a complaint under 'Cyber Trafficking / Cyber Slavery'. Upload all evidence: screenshots of the job offer, chat logs, receipts, passport copies, and the recruiter's phone numbers.

4**Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU)**

Every state police has an AHTU. Gujarat Police AHTU can be reached via the 1930 helpline or your local district police station. They coordinate directly with Interpol and destination-country police forces.

5**Follow up with your complaint number**

After filing, you receive a complaint number. Track progress at cybercrime.gov.in. Visit your local cyber police station with printed evidence and a valid ID and request an FIR if one has not already been filed.



Family Safety Checklist

Young adults seeking employment abroad and recent graduates are most heavily targeted. Review this checklist with every member of your household:

- Establish a rule: any overseas job offer received via WhatsApp or Telegram must be verified with the family before any action.
- Save **1930** and **+91-11-2301-2113** (MEA Emergency) on every phone in the house.
- Verify any recruitment agency at **emigrate.gov.in** — only MEA-registered agents are lawful.
- Never allow a family member to surrender their passport to anyone other than an airline check-in counter or immigration officer.
- Agree on a family distress code word — one that can be slipped into a normal-sounding message if the person is in danger.
- If a family member stops communicating after travelling abroad, call 1930 and the MEA helpline immediately — do not wait.
- Discuss cyber slavery awareness monthly and warn younger siblings, cousins, and neighbours about fake job offers.
- Avoid posting family travel plans, passport details, or financial situations on social media.

Real Cases Reported in India

Kerala — IT Graduate (2024)

A 24-year-old software graduate was offered a customer support role in Cambodia via Telegram at **₹2 lakh/month**. On arrival his passport was seized and he was forced to run cryptocurrency fraud calls for eight months. After secretly messaging his family, the MEA and Cambodian police coordinated his rescue along with 22 other Indians from the same compound.

Rajasthan — Group of 11 Workers (2024)

Eleven young men from Rajasthan were recruited through a WhatsApp group promising data-entry jobs in Myanmar. All were trafficked into a cyber scam compound near the Thai-Myanmar border. Following family complaints to 1930 and the MEA, all eleven were repatriated after three months.

Telangana — Engineer Avoids Trap (2025)

A Hyderabad-based engineer received a Telegram offer for a 'digital marketing manager' role in Phnom Penh. She searched the company name, found no registration, and reported the recruiter's number to 1930 — which linked it to an ongoing trafficking investigation, preventing her recruitment and aiding a wider bust.



Important Contacts & Resources

Service	Contact
National Cyber Crime Helpline	1930 (24x7, toll-free)
National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal	cybercrime.gov.in
MEA Emergency Helpline (overseas distress)	+91-11-2301-2113
Indian Embassy — Thailand	+66-2258-0300
Indian Embassy — Cambodia	+855-23-210-912
Indian Embassy — Myanmar	+95-1-229-123
Police Emergency	112
Anti-Human Trafficking (via local police)	Dial 112 / 1930
Report fraudulent job ads (DoT)	sancharsaathi.gov.in
CERT-In (incident reporting)	incident@cert-in.org.in

Five Things to Remember

1**Cyber slavery is a crime — against the victim.**

Trafficked workers are not criminals. They are victims of organised crime who deserve protection, rescue, and legal support under Indian and international law.

2**A job offer via WhatsApp is almost never legitimate.**

Real employers recruit through registered agencies or formal interviews. Unsolicited offers for high-paying overseas roles are a major red flag.

3**Your passport belongs to you — always.**

No recruiter, employer, or agent has the legal right to hold your passport. Surrendering it means losing your freedom. Guard it at all times.

4**The first call home can save your life.**

Even one distress message to family triggers a chain: family calls 1930, MEA alerts the Embassy, police coordinate rescue. One message is enough.

5**Awareness prevents trafficking — share it.**

Talk about cyber slavery with friends, siblings, and job-seekers in your community. One conversation can stop a recruitment before it begins.

If you remember only one number: **1930**.

If you remember only one website: **cybercrime.gov.in**.

If you remember only one rule: **never surrender your passport**.