

**DRI BUSTS SMUGGLING RACKET, SEIZES 17.9KG GOLD WORTH ₹6 CRORE | 5**

**METRO RA EKKATTUT**

# Cops Bring Gang Held In Cyberabad To City, Lift The Lid On Phishing Scams

## A ROGUE MAIL, A 'SIM SWAP' AND A SCAM WORTH CRORE

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**G**one are the days when spammers identifying themselves as an deposed African king would send a mail promising millions and then seek your bank details. Online scamsters now send phishing emails — whose content can range from shopping links to job offers to dating opportunities — embedded with viruses or malware that can track online activities and email contents of a gullible user.

But it does not stop there and the arrest of six men by the Cyberabad police last month has brought to the fore new-gen scams where one can lose lakhs in a few minutes just by clicking on a rogue mail. The arrested men — Henry Odafe, a Nigerian national based in Kolkata, his accomplices Santosh Banerjee, Ankan Saha, Rajat Kundu, Chandan Verma and Sanjib Das — who were brought to the city on Friday had cheated a Chennai businessman, Vijayakumar, of ₹1.25 crore through 'SIM swapping'. The Cyberabad police arrested them for cheating 13 companies and stealing ₹1 crore from their bank accounts.

### POLICE SAID ABOUT 1,000 SUCH SCAMSTERS ARE ACTIVE ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Police officers who interrogated the men said they confessed to have targeted private companies such as Bass Shipping and Marie Wilson in the city. Henry told police that after the money was transferred to bank accounts in Kolkata and other places, the gang withdrew a portion of the cash and bought gold ornaments and other valuables.

Police said Odafe told them that the brain behind the scam was Ebigo Innocent aka James, also a Nigerian, who is on the run. Odafe, who came to India on a student visa and then overstayed, said he and his team were instructed on WhatsApp and Skype by James who has links with hackers based abroad. James passed on information about a potential target to his 'field team' which prepared forged documents such as Aadhaar and PAN cards. After blocking the victim's SIM card and procuring a new one, they would

siphon off money to other accounts (see graphic).

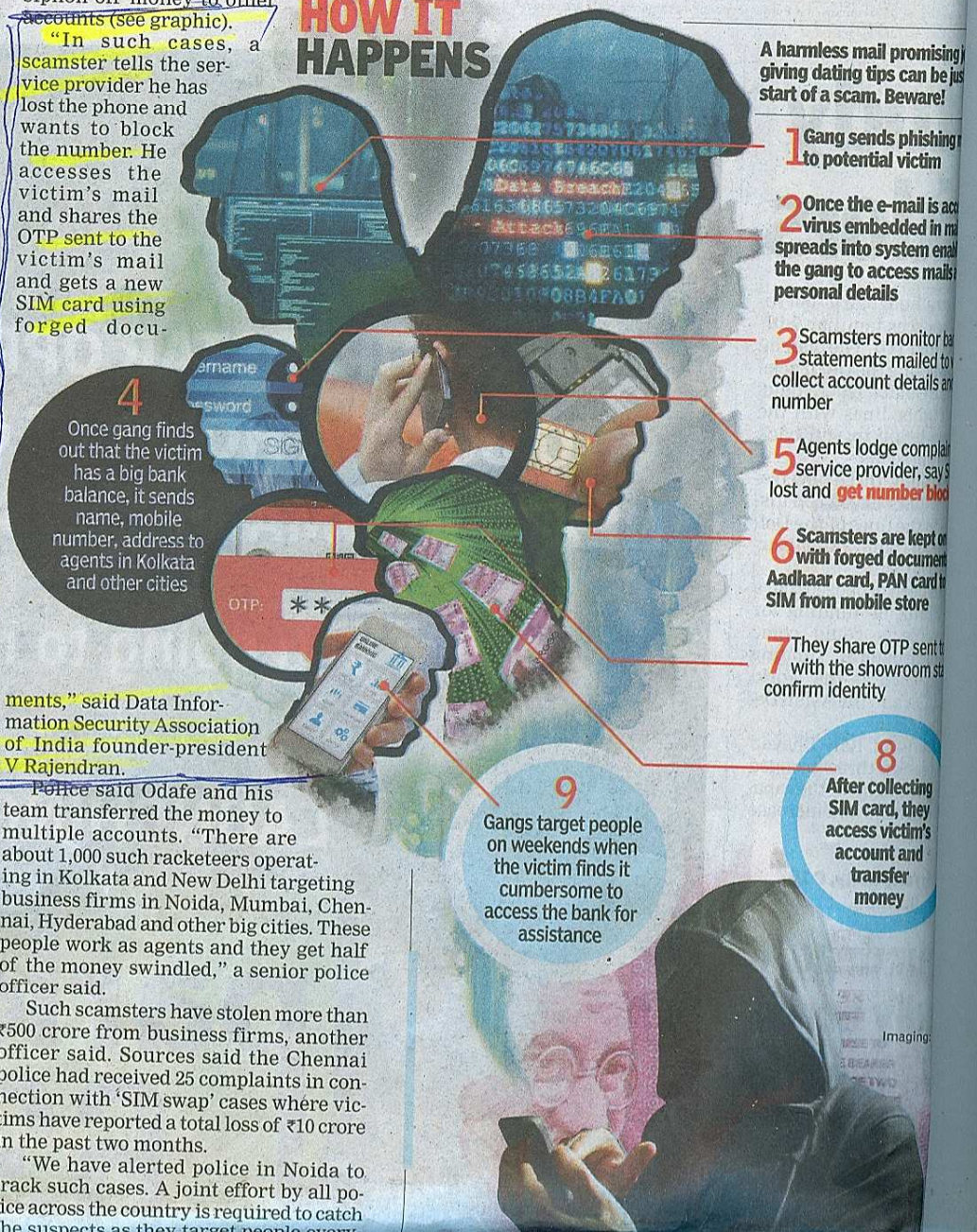
"In such cases, a scamster tells the service provider he has lost the phone and wants to block the number. He accesses the victim's mail and shares the OTP sent to the victim's mail and gets a new SIM card using forged documents," said Data Information Security Association of India founder-president V Rajendran.

Police said Odafe and his team transferred the money to multiple accounts. "There are about 1,000 such racketeers operating in Kolkata and New Delhi targeting business firms in Noida, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and other big cities. These people work as agents and they get half of the money swindled," a senior police officer said.

Such scamsters have stolen more than ₹500 crore from business firms, another officer said. Sources said the Chennai police had received 25 complaints in connection with 'SIM swap' cases where victims have reported a total loss of ₹10 crore in the past two months.

"We have alerted police in Noida to track such cases. A joint effort by all police across the country is required to catch the suspects as they target people everywhere," the officer said.

### HOW IT HAPPENS



A harmless mail promising giving dating tips can be just start of a scam. Beware!

Imaging