

Mumbai sees 218% spike in cyber crime, Maha tops among states

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Mumbai: The city saw a 218% rise in cyber crime cases in 2012, with 33 cases registered under the Information Technology (IT) Act and 72 under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), according to the National Crime Records Bureau. The total of 105 cases was way over the 33 total cases registered in 2011. In fact, the 2011 figure was a 32.7% drop from the previous year's 49 cases. Nationwide, Mumbai saw the third highest number of cases registered under the IT Act in 2012, with Bangalore and Pune topping the list.

State-wise, Maharashtra recorded more cyber crime than any other state, with 471 different offences registered under the IT Act and 90 under the IPC in 2012. The total of 561 cases

was a 42.7% increase from the 393 cases registered the previous year. Andhra Pradesh was second with 454 cases and Karnataka third with 437 cases registered under both categories in 2012.

"More criminals are becoming tech-savvy, either to earn fast money or take revenge,"

While 561 cyber crime incidents were registered in the state in 2012 (a 42.7% increase over 2011), 105 cases were reported from Mumbai alone

said additional commissioner of police (crime) Niket Kaushik.

Former IPS officer-turned-lawyer Y P Singh said educated youths looking for easy money or other kicks are mainly getting involved in the nascent field of cyber crime. "It is an easy way to propagate porn or defame. Hacking is also an at-

traction. One also uses credit cards or do money transfers from banks illegally."

Hacking cases in the state rose from 31 in 2010 to 210 in 2012. Publication of obscene content rose from 44 in 2010 to 76 in 2012.

IT expert Vijay Mukhi said, "A separate cyber squad needs

to be set up with cops who have IT and legal expertise. A low conviction rate boosts the confidence of cyber criminals." He added that in California it is mandatory for a bank to lodge a complaint in case of banking fraud. "In India, the RBI and government have not measured the seriousness of online banking fraud."

Former director of the state Forensic Science Laboratory, Dr Rukmini Krishnamurthy, said the increase in cyber crime should not come as a surprise. "In fact, there are at least two unreported cases for every case that comes out in the open. Companies are the main victims. Most often, corporate cyber crime goes unreported as it involves clientele values and reputation."

Krishnamurthy, who is currently chairperson of a company that provides digital, cyber and other forensic services, said the increasing dependence on technology puts more private information in the public domain. "Common people don't understand how very private information can become public knowledge. People should know how to fiddle with security settings," she added.