

# 31-yr-old arrested in Myanmar trafficking case dies in custody

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**Hyderabad:** A 31-year-old man, arrested for his alleged involvement in a scheme that trafficked youth to Thailand, Laos and Myanmar, died on Thursday in Nizamabad while in police custody.

Family members of the agent, Alakunta Sampath, accused police of subjecting him to third-degree torture causing his death.

Nizamabad police, however, maintained that Sampath had died of a heart attack. Police commissioner P Sai Chaitanya said an independent probe has been initiated following guidelines of the Supreme Court, National Human Rights Commission, and BNSS protocols.

Sampath, hailing from Telangana, was arrested on Mar 4 on charges of luring youth and sending them to Thailand, Laos and Myanmar, where they were forced into cyber slavery. He had set up a manpower recruitment office in Jagtial.

Sampath was taken into police custody on Mar 12. On March 13 around 10.10pm, he reportedly complained of fatigue and pain in his left

## Myanmar cybercrime gangs behind crypto gold coin scam, allege 2 rescued victims

**T**wo Telangana men rescued from Myanmar claimed the cybercrime syndicates orchestrated a large-scale cryptocurrency scam targeting US investors. These syndicates allegedly deceived individuals by promoting fraudulent gold-backed cryptocurrency investments, using price manipulation. Katam Venu, one of the victims, was assigned to Shanshub Company at KK4 Park, where he was instructed to interact with US investors on WhatsApp and Facebook, posing as a woman. His job was to convince investors to purchase cryptocurrency gold coins through a platform controlled by Chinese operators. The scammers manipulated price graph of the coins to make investments appear profitable. Similarly, Mohammed Arbaz Bin Ba Bazer was placed at Zhantu Company in KK2, KK Park, where he was trained in cryptocurrency fraud using social media manipulation. Both Venu and Arbaz were rescued in a military operation in Myanmar, and have since returned to India. —**U Sudhakarreddy**

hand. He was taken to govt general hospital in Nizamabad. "CCTV footage showed him walking into the hospital on his own," a police officer said.

The police commissioner added, "At 11.29pm, Sampath suffered a sudden cardiac arrest, collapsed, and despite efforts by the medical team to revive him, he could not be resuscitated. Doctors confirmed that the cause of death was a massive heart attack." Following Sampath's death,

an FIR was registered and an investigation was launched.

However, angry relatives demanded that a murder case be registered against the officers involved and called for their suspension.

A tense situation prevailed at the hospital, where Sampath's family members staged a protest, alleging that he had been tortured to death. They have demanded Rs 50 lakh in compensation and a govt job for a member of the family.

## Sampath's 'victims' were forced into cyber slavery

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Sampath, a native of Aathar-gaon village in Peddapalli district, was accused of luring un-employed rural youth to Thailand, Myanmar and Laos, where they were forced into cyber slavery.

He was arrested on March 4 and was taken into custody again on March 12 through a court order for further investigation.

During interrogation, Sampath confessed to the crime and disclosed that he had two mobile phones in his office. His

statement was also recorded.

On Thursday, Cybercrime sleuths took him to his office, Sri Rama Manpower Consultancy, in Jagtial, where they recovered the phones and recorded his statement again. He was brought back to Nizamabad Cybercrime police station at around 9:45 pm.

Later that night, Sampath complained of fatigue and pain in his left hand. He was rushed to the GGH, where doctors began treatment. At 10:49 pm, he suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed. Despite

CPR being administered, he died due to a cardiac arrest.

His family was informed, and they arrived at the hospital early on Friday. The body was later moved for postmortem.

Nizamabad Police Commissioner P Sai Chaitanya stated that the postmortem was conducted following Supreme Court and NHRC guidelines, in the presence of a magistrate and three forensic experts, with videography documentation. Statements from two family members were also recorded.

The body was later handed over to the family. A DSP-rank officer has been assigned to investigate the case. He also mentioned that CCTV footage and documentary evidence related to the case were available and a report would be sent to the NHRC.

Meanwhile, Sampath's family members continued to allege that he died due to police torture. They have demanded action against the investigating officers. "Sampath met his family in Jagtial and spoke to them over the phone, telling them about the beatings by the po-

lice," said his relative Vallepu Shankar Raj. Sampath's two wives have demanded justice.

A relative mentioned that the family received a call from the police at 12:30 am. He added that Sampath had earlier asked his family to arrange ₹10 lakh but did not reveal the reason. While the family was busy arranging the money, they received news of his death.

Meanwhile, Nizamabad ACP L Raja Venkat Reddy, One-Town SHO B Raghupathi and other officials met the victim's family at GGH mortuary and attempted to pacify them.

