



## Diwali 2025: How users can protect finances while online shopping

As Diwali 2025 approaches, online transactions are expected to surge, increasing exposure to digital fraud. Consumers should follow secure payment practices to safeguard personal finances.

By Anshul



India's festive season consistently drives significant digital activity. During Diwali 2024, e-commerce sales crossed ₹90,000 crore, while IRCTC handled over 13 lakh bookings daily at peak. Quick-commerce order volumes doubled to \$7.3 billion, and total e-retail spending reached \$60 billion, indicating growing adoption of digital-first shopping across Tier II and Tier III cities.

Industry experts note that higher transaction volumes during peak festive periods create conditions conducive to cyber threats.

Parag Khurana, Country Manager, India at Barracuda Networks, observes that increased online activity can raise the risk of scams during the shopping season.

### Fraud tactics

Cybercriminals are using artificial intelligence to craft highly personalised phishing messages that mimic legitimate merchant communications.

Sneha Katkar, Head of Product Strategy at Quick Heal Technologies, explains that AI-generated messaging can be contextual, exploiting seasonal promotions.

Digital payment fraud has also evolved to include QR code and UPI-related scams.

Harsha Solanki, VP GM Asia at Infobip, notes that as online spending grows in e-retail and quick-commerce, scam methods are adapting to target consumers more effectively.

## Business and consumer impact

The risk extends to businesses as well. Employees using company devices for personal shopping may inadvertently expose networks to threats.

MSMEs, which can generate up to 40% of annual sales during the festive season, may face significant financial losses if targeted successfully.

## Consumer protection measures

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) recommends the following steps for secure transactions:

- Shop only on official platforms: Use verified apps and websites; avoid links from emails, SMS, or forwarded messages.
- Complete payments within the platform: Do not authorize payments on external links or UPI IDs outside official checkout pages.
- Verify offers carefully: Be cautious of vouchers, cashback, or gifts requesting sensitive information or fees.
- Treat unexpected OTP requests as alerts: Banks and payment apps do not request OTPs unsolicited.
- Avoid acting under pressure: Pause and verify offers claiming urgency or potential account issues.

Adopting the 'Stop, Think, Act' principle—pausing before responding, verifying information, and acting carefully—can help consumers protect personal financial information during Diwali 2025.