

# Six held for giving extortion calls, death threats to MLAs

Haryana Special Task Force Finds Pak, West Asia Connection

**Gurugram:** The Special Task Force of the Haryana Police has arrested six people for allegedly giving death threats and extortion calls to MLAs, an officer said on Sunday.

Four MLAs from the state received such calls from June 24 to 28 from multiple phone numbers which were traced to West Asian countries and operated from Pakistan, STF Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sathesh Balan told the media at the unit's headquarters in Bawali here.

Some ex-MLAs from Punjab, too, had received similar threats from these numbers. The callers spoke to them in Mumbai accent and in Punjabi, the IGP said.

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The other four — Amit Yadav, Sadig Anwar, Samaj Kumar, Kash Alam — all natives of Bihar, were arrested from the state's Muzaffarpur, he said. Fifty-five ATM cards, 24 mobile phones, 50 SIM cards, 22 passbooks and cheque books, Rs 3.97 lakh, an SUV, three dildars and a register were recovered from them, the IGP said.

FIRs were lodged against unknown people for issuing death threats to the MLAs, he added.

ter which Haryana Director General of Police P K Agrawal assigned the case to the STF.

IGP Balan said as part of the STF's strategy to nab the accused, the force disguised itself and deliberately came in the gang's radar after which its personnel too began receiving similar threat calls.

In the part of paying up the money demanded by the callers, the police teams noted down their particulars, such as bank accounts details, following which raids were held across Mumbai and Muzaffarpur simultaneously, Balan said.

During investigation, the STF also learnt about 30 Pakistani residents through whom the threats and extortion calls were created, he added.

The IGP said the culprits often offered Rs 15-20,000 to poor people and lured them into opening bank accounts to carry out the gang's transactions.

These accused do not belong to any criminal gang or terrorist organisation. This is a gang of very sharp criminals who are involved in professional fraud, money laundering and have their members across Pakistan, Middle East (West Asia) and India," he said.

"People sitting in these other countries would entice victims in the guise of an entry into Kaum Baisega Crorepati" or saying they have won lotteries or by extortion calls and would make them transfer the money in the account numbers given by Dulesh or Badre," he added. ■

## 1 held in Mangaluru youth murder case

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**Mangaluru:** Police officers investigating the murder of Muhammad Farid combed through registration details of 1,000 cars and questioned more than 100 people in the past 48 hours before making the first arrest in the case late on Saturday. Farid (23) was hacked to death by a group of people at Surathkal in Mangalore district of Karnataka on July 31.

The arrested person has been identified as Ajith Crasta, who owned the car hired allegedly by the assailants. Police said the car — a compact, entry-level vehicle — is registered in the name of Ajith's wife. Acting on a tip-off, police tracked down the car near Kedukunna in Ima village near Padubidri in Udupi district, 8km from the scene of the crime, on Sunday.

ADGP (law and order) Alok Mohan told TOI that Ajith is the first to be arrested in the case. Sources said Ajith and one of the accused in the murder case had interacted many times in the past about renting of vehicles.

### NIA detains UP Madrassa student for 'terror links'

**Saharanpur (UP):** A madrassa student, hailing from Karnataka, was detained for questioning by a team of the National Investigation Agency on Sunday for suspected terror links.

The student, Farukh, was staying at a madrassa in Deoband of Saharanpur, police sources said. The student was let off after eight hours of questioning. Senior Superintendent of Police Vinod Tada confirmed Farukh's detention. According to the sources, Farukh is adept in many languages and was allegedly in touch with a module of the Pakistani intelligence unit ISI via a social media app. ■

Farid (23) was a resident of Mangalore in Kittiplaya under Surathkal police station jurisdiction. Mangalore City police suspect the involvement of a rowdy-shooter in his murder.

Mangalore City police commissioner N Shashi Kumar said, "Based on

CCTV footage, we started looking for cars of a similar model, colour and brand (used in the murder). Since there was no clarity on the vehicle's number plate, police made a list of similar cars in that area. In the past two days, they zeroed in on cars in use in the surrounding areas. From the list, the search was narrowed down to about 15 cars. Seven people, including those working in banks, refineries and private companies, were questioned in an attempt to identify the owner." ■

On Saturday evening, car owner Ajith was taken into custody. During interrogation, he reportedly provided information about those who had hired the car from him. "Based on the inputs provided by the car owner, we'll take steps to arrest the culprits. As the investigation is under progress, we cannot reveal more details," Shashi Kumar said.

Ajith has two cars and a lorry which he gives on rent. One of the accused in the case was in touch with him for a long time. In the past too, he had hired the car from him. ■

## 7 Guj students caught trying to enter New York via Quebec

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**Ahmedabad:** There are plenty of distressing stories about the risks people take to enter the US illegally but probably not enough to deter Gujarat youths obsessed with making it to American soil. In July, seven students from north Gujarat were caught by US immigration officers while attempting to enter New York through the Quebec route, officers of Gujarat Police told TOI. Aged between 20 and 25, the men from Gandhinagar and Mehsana had gone to Canada in the second week of July, hoping to cross over into the US.

"They were arrested while entering New York via Quebec in Canada by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), face charges under the Alien Act and are under detention in Albany," said a source. Gujarat Police tried to gather details about the seven by questioning their families, but to no avail. The kin of those detained maintained that they

were unaware of the journey of the seven in the US. Police sources said the seven men procured forged IELTS certificates with the help of a local agent from Mehsana and his counterpart in Delhi and travelled to Canada on student visas. "When they attempted to cross over into the US, they were caught by the US agency," said a police source.

On May 5, six from Gujarat — most of them from Mehsana — were rescued after their boat began sinking in the St. Regis River along the Canada-US border. A local court later exempted them from criminal proceedings and asked them to advise their countrymen to not enter the US illegally. A thriving human smuggling network came to the fore when a family of four from Dangda was found frozen to death near the Canada-US border on January 16. Jagdish Patel (38), his wife Vaishali (37), and their children Vithangi (11) and Dharmik (3), lost their lives while embarking on a perilous journey to the US.

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## Class I girl's letter to PM about costlier pencil, Maggi goes viral

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**Kanpur:** A letter written by a class I student to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the "hardship" she is facing due to price rises has gone viral on social media.

Six-year-old Kriti Dubey of Chhatarpur town in Uttar Pradesh's Kannauj district wrote in her letter — which is in Hindi — addressed to the 'pradhan mantri' (PM): "My name is Kriti Dubey I study in class 1. I told you, you have caused immense price rise. Even my pencil and rubber (eraser) have got costlier and the price of Maggi has been increased, too. Now my mother beats me for asking for a pencil. What shall I do? Other kids steal my pencil."

Kriti's father Vishal Dubey, an advocate, confirmed that the letter has been posted to

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