

UP tobacco baron's son rams Lamborghini into pedestrians in Kanpur, FIR registered

**KANPUR, FEB 9:** Police on Monday filed an FIR against an "unidentified person" after a speeding Lamborghini allegedly driven by a tobacco baron's son ploughed into pedestrians here, leaving at least six injured.

Recalling the horror, which unfolded on VIP Road in the upscale Gwaltoli area on Sunday, eyewitnesses said the car first hit an autorickshaw and then crashed into a stationary motorcycle, flinging its rider nearly 10 feet into the air.

The car mounted the motorcycle's front wheel and dragged it for some distance before hitting an electric pole and coming to a halt.

An FIR has been registered in the matter against an unidentified person, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Atul Kumar Srivastava said.

No one has been detained in connection with the incident, the DCP said in a response to a question, adding that a detailed probe is underway.

Asked if the driver was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident, the officer said it will be known once the probe has been completed.

On Sunday, Srivastava told



reporters, "The accident occurred around 3.15 pm near Rev-3 Mall when the luxury car, allegedly driven by Shivam Mishra, the son of businessman K K Mishra, went out of control and ploughed into people standing along the roadside and several vehicles, triggering panic in the area." K K Mishra is the owner of Banshidhar Exports Pvt. Ltd., which supplies tobacco to gutkha manufacturers in the region.

One of the injured, Taufiq, a resident of Yamunaganj, was thrown several metres and suffered serious leg in-

juries. The remaining injured sustained fractures and bruises, police said.

Angry locals gathered at the spot after the accident and surrounded the car, forcing the driver to remain inside.

Witnesses alleged that private bouncers accompanying the accused tried to push back the crowd and behaved aggressively, escalating tension. Police rushed to the spot, rescued the driver and shifted him and the injured to a private hospital. The damaged Lamborghini was seized and taken to the police station, officials said.

At the police station, the victims and local residents alleged misbehaviour by the associates of the accused and claimed that police were going soft on him due to his family's influence. Some alleged that pressure was being exerted for a compromise.

Sonu Tripathi, one of the injured, told mediapersons that he and his cousin were standing near their motorcycle when the car hit them.

He said his cousin fell and two other persons were flung onto the footpath. "We have filed a complaint, he said. (PTI)

Crackdown on dissent after nationwide protests in Iran widens to ensnare reformist figures

**DUBAI, FEB 9:** Iranian security forces have launched a campaign to arrest figures within the country's reformist movement, reports said on Monday.

That widens a crackdown on dissent after authorities earlier put down nationwide protests in violence that killed thousands and saw tens of thousands more detained.

Detained Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi has received another prison sentence of over seven years. It signals a widening effort to silence anyone opposed to the bloody suppression of unrest by Iran's theocracy as it faces new nuclear talks with the United States. President Donald Trump has repeatedly warned he could launch an attack on the country if no deal is reached.

Media reports quoted officials within the reformist movement, which seeks to change Iran's theocracy from inside, as saying at least four of their members had been arrested. They include Azar Mansouri, the head of the Reformist Front, which represents multiple reformist factions, and former diplomat Mohsen Aminzadeh, who served under reformist President Mohammad



Khatami.

Also detained was Ebrahim Asgharzadeh, who led students who stormed the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979, sparking the 444-day hostage crisis.

Their arrests likely stem from a reformist statement in January that called for Iran's 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to resign from his position and have a transitional governing council oversee the country.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency quoted a statement from prosecutors in Tehran, the country's capital, saying four people had been arrested and others summoned to meet authorities. It accused those allegedly involved of "organising and leading ... activities aimed at disrupting the political and social situation in the coun-

try amid military threats from the United States and the Zionist regime."

"Having bludgeoned the streets into silence with exemplary cruelty, the regime has shifted its attention inward, fixing its stare on its loyal opposition," wrote Ali Vaez, an Iran expert at the International Crisis Group.

"The reformists, sensing the ground move beneath them, had begun to drift – and power, ever paranoid, is now determined to cauterise dissent before it learns to walk." However, it remains unclear just how much political support reformists have within Iran. The anger on the streets of Iran during the demonstrations, heard in people shouting "Death to Khamenei!" and in support of the country's exiled crown prince, appeared to lump reformists in with all other

politicians now working in the Islamic Republic.

Iran and the US held new nuclear talks last week in Oman. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, speaking Sunday to diplomats at a summit in Tehran, signalled that Iran would stick to its position that it must be able to enrich uranium – a major point of contention with Trump, who bombed Iranian atomic sites in June during the 12-day Iran-Israel war.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to travel to Washington this week, with Iran expected to be the major subject of discussion, his office said.

The US has moved the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, ships and warplanes to the Middle East to pressure Iran into an agreement and have the firepower necessary to strike the Islamic Republic should Trump choose to do so.

Meanwhile, Iran issued a warning to pilots that it planned "rocket launches" from Monday into Tuesday in an area over the country's Semnan province, home to the Imam Khomeini Spaceport. Such launches have corresponded in the past with Iran marking the anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

PM Did Not Come To LS Fearing Naravane Book Issue Not Because Of Threat From MPs: Rahul

**NEW DELHI, FEB 9:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not come to the Lok Sabha to reply to the discussion on the motion of thanks to the President's address as he was scared of the issue of former army chief MM Naravane's book.

Gandhi also dared those claiming that there was a threat to the prime minister from members last Thursday to "file an FIR" against the person threatening Modi.

He said the government is scared of having a discussion on the Budget because of the issue of the US deal, the way it was done, and its impact on farmers.

"We are very disturbed about this idea that has been floated that members were going to threaten the PM. There is no question of that. The fact is very clear the prime minister was scared to come to the House not because of the members but because of what I was saying and he is still scared because he cannot face the truth," the Leader of Opposition in the



Lok Sabha said.

There was no question of the Congress members attacking the prime minister, he said. "He (Modi) should have the courage to come. I also mentioned that 'look, if somebody has said that he is going to attack the PM. Please do an FIR, arrest that person'. Why you are not doing that!" Gandhi said.

"The agreement is that we will be allowed to say these points and then the discussion should happen," he said. Gandhi said the opposition is quite keen that the discussion happens.

"But let us see what the

government says. My personal view is that the government is scared to have a debate. The PM did not come to the House. He was scared of what we say, he was scared of being handed Naravane's book as a first step," Gandhi said.

"My guess is government is worried about having a debate on the Budget because the issue of the US deal, the way it was done, its impact on our farmers, is going to be discussed and the government does not want to do that," he said.

Gandhi said the matter started a few days ago when

the issue of the Naravane book came to the fore.

"The government did not want me to talk about it so they stalled the House. They did not let me speak. That happened 3-4 times. First, they said I cannot quote a book, then I said I am not quoting a book, I am quoting a magazine. Then they said you cannot quote a magazine. Then I said I will speak about it. They did not want me to speak about it," he said.

Gandhi alleged that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made a false claim that the book was unpublished. "The book has been published and we have got a copy of it," the Congress leader said.

"So, that is one big issue of not allowing the LoP and entire opposition in the President's address. One of their members quoted books and spoke vile stuff and nothing was said.

We don't like the fact that they can say whatever they want whenever they want and the opposition cannot," he said.

**BEIJING, FEB 9:** China on Monday said that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's massive victory in the midterm polls, a result widely seen as fuelled by public resentment over Beijing's strong opposition to her, reflects some deep-seated structural problems and shifting ideological currents.

Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party won more than two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives in Sunday's election.

The election results in Japan reflected some deep-seated structural problems as well as evolving trends of ideological currents, which deserve profound reflection by visionary individuals from all walks of life in Japan and the international community at large, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters.

He was replying to a question at a media briefing here whether Beijing's tough stance toward Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan, persisting



with diplomatic tension, influenced the outcome of elections in her favour.

China never interferes in the internal affairs of other countries, firmly opposes any erroneous words and actions that interfere in its internal affairs, infringe upon its core interests, Lin said, defending Beijing's tough stance towards Japan in the last few months objecting to Takaichi's remarks.

China mounted a massive diplomatic offensive against Japan over Takaichi's remarks in November last year

that a Taiwan contingency could be a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan that may lead to action from the country's defence forces in support of the United States.

China, which claims Taiwan as part of it and vows to integrate it with the mainland, asked her to retract her remarks, saying that Taiwan-related issues are its internal affairs.

China's policy toward Japan is clear and consistent, Lin told a media briefing here while answering a vol-

ley of questions on Takaichi's victory, which came as a surprise here. A

Regardless of who leads Japan or which party is in power, they must abide by the four political documents between China and Japan, as well as Japan's pacifist constitution, and fulfil their commitments and international obligations, Lin said.

He hoped that Japan would pursue a peaceful path and "not repeat the mistakes of militarism."

The diplomatic row deepened after the Chinese Consul General in Osaka, Xue Jian, in a post on X, threatened to "cut off dirty neck without a moment of hesitation", prompting Japan to lodge a strong protest with China.

China, which is the largest source of tourists to Japan, also asked its citizens to avoid travelling to Japan, resulting in a spate of cancellations of trips by Chinese tourists. China also banned imports of fish from Japan. (PTI)

Absolutely bizarre: Tharoor slams govt for not allowing Rahul Gandhi to speak in LS

**NEW DELHI, FEB 9:** Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday said Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi must be allowed to put forth his concerns in the Lok Sabha and described as "absolutely bizarre" the "denial of the right to speak to one side" in the House.

Tharoor, who was to initiate the discussion on the Union Budget, said yielded to Gandhi to make his remarks before his speech, but both his and the LoP's microphones were cut off.

The Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram wondered what the Speaker and the government wanted.

"The situation is very strange. I don't know whether the Speaker or the government do not want the House to debate the Budget. Very clearly, there is a long-standing tradition of the House, of more than 70 years, that when two people

ask for the floor, it is always given – first is the LoP and the other is the minister for Parliamentary Affairs," Tharoor told reporters in the Parliament House complex after the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day.

"Now we have had two successive presiding officers who refused to let the LoP speak, whereas the minister for Parliamentary Affairs, whenever he raises his hand, is given the floor. That is not correct. You cannot favour the government side like this. The House belongs to all of us," the Congress leader said.

The government has the right to reply in due course and no one is going to prevent them from replying, he said.

Tharoor further said, "He (Gandhi) should be allowed to lay his concerns on the table. When you do not allow him to speak, you actually undermine the purpose of Parliament which is the

House for discussion and deliberation. So I do not understand what instructions these presiding officers came with, but they simply would not let Rahul Gandhi ji speak." "So when I got the mic on the Budget, I said I yield to the LoP, 'let him speak'. Then they cut off my mic and the LoP's mic. I don't understand what the government and Speaker want?" he said.

In Parliament, both sides have the right to speak, but to deny one side the right to speak is "absolutely bizarre", Tharoor said "It is not the parliamentary culture that we have been accustomed to over seven decades of democracy. He (Gandhi) was standing up to clarify some of the allegations made against the opposition that women MPs were to attack the PM etc... How would we know what he would have said?" Tharoor added.

The Lok Sabha was ad-

journed for the day amid a stand-off between the government and the opposition over Gandhi's demand that he be allowed to speak before the discussion on the Union Budget begins.

When the House met at 2 pm after two adjournments, Sandhya Ray, who was in the Chair, asked Congress member Shashi Tharoor to initiate the debate on the Budget.

Tharoor told the Chair that Gandhi, being the LoP, should be allowed to raise certain points before he starts his speech.

Ray said if Gandhi wanted to speak on the Budget, she had no issues and asked him to begin.

Gandhi said an agreement was reached at a meeting between Speaker Om Birla and some opposition MPs that he would be allowed to raise certain points before the Budget discussion, but the Chair was now going back on its word.

Babies among 53 dead or missing after migrant boat sinks off Libya, UN says

**CAIRO, FEB 9:** Two babies are among at least 53 people dead or missing after an inflatable migrant boat sank off Libya, the UN migration agency said on Monday, the latest tragedy on a dangerous route for those seeking a better life in Europe.

The UN's International Organisation for Migration said in a statement that the boat with 55 African migrants on board departed Libya's western town of Zawiyah shortly before midnight on Thursday. Around six hours later, it began taking on water and capsized on Friday morning north of the town of Zuwara, it said.

Two Nigerian women survived the shipwreck and were rescued by Libyan authorities, IOM said. One of them said she lost her husband, while the other reported losing her two babies.

"Trafficking and smuggling networks continue to exploit migrants along the



central Mediterranean route," the UN agency said. These networks make profits through using "unseaworthy boats" to sail migrants from the chaos-stricken Libya to European shores, it added. Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East, even though the North African nation has

plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed long-time autocrat Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

The number of migrants reported dead or missing in 2026 on the central Mediterranean route now stands at 484, according to the IOM's missing migrants project. Last year saw more than 1,300 migrants dead or missing on that route, it said.

"These repeated incidents underscore the persistent and deadly risks faced by migrants and refugees attempting the dangerous crossing," it said.

Human traffickers in recent years have benefited from the chaos in Libya, smuggling in migrants across the country's lengthy borders, which it shares with six nations. The migrants are usually forced to sail on crowded, ill-equipped vessels, including rubber boats.

Those who are intercepted and returned to Libya are held in government-run detention centres rife with abuses, including forced labour, beatings, rapes and torture – practices that amount to crimes against humanity, according to UN-commissioned investigators.

The abuse often accompanies efforts to extort money from families of those held, before the migrants are allowed to leave Libya on traffickers' boats. (AP)