

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

4 dead, 17 hospitalised after under-construction Kolkata warehouse collapses, several remain trapped

KOLKATA, JUN 24: Four people died and 17 others were hospitalised after a three-storey under-construction warehouse in the Taratala area of west Kolkata collapsed on Wednesday afternoon, trapping several people underneath the rubble, a senior West Bengal health department officer said.

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, who visited the disaster site where rescue operations were underway, stated that about 18 others remained trapped under the rubble where coordinated rescue efforts were being made by state and central agencies, including the army.

The collapsed warehouse is a lease-hold property under the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in the city, an official said.

"So far, 21 people have been rescued; three of whom have perished. The others have been admitted to SSKM Hospital where all efforts are being made to provide them with adequate medical attention," the CM had said earlier, following which the death toll increased.

Till reports last received, all the rescued people, believed to be workers at the construction site, were admitted to the Trauma Care Centre of the state-run SSKM Hospital, the condition of several of them was stated to be critical.

A multi-disciplinary team of doctors, involving neurologists, orthopaedics and general medicine experts, has been set up to attend to the injured patients who have suffered severe trauma, they added.

roof of the warehouse located on the Transport Depot Road near Brace Bridge in the Taratala area collapsed around noon. Some people were working at the site at the time of the incident," a Kolkata Police officer said.

Massive chunks of iron beams and concrete crumbled during the construction, where several workers were engaged. Eyewitnesses at the site said they heard trapped victims crying for help from beneath the debris.



"Construction activities were taking place on the ground floor while the RCC structure for the first and second floors had been completed. The entire structure came crashing down," an eyewitness said.

"The Army has already established contact with those who still remain trapped," Adhikari said, amid estimates that, given the large blocks of concrete that still have to be removed, the rescue operations could continue for a formidable period of time.

According to a fire department official, the roof of the three-storey under-construction warehouse collapsed during casting work. He also alleged that standard materials were being used.

Personnel of the Kolkata Police, disaster management teams, civil defence, and fire and emergency services personnel were carrying out rescue operations at the site on a war footing.

Army officials also aided rescue operations, while cranes and heavy equipment lifting machinery were deployed at the site to remove the collapsed iron beams.

Gas cutters were being used to cut through the iron and concrete, and rescue workers were trying to reach the trapped victims by means of vertical drilling.

Sniffer dogs and overhead drones were deployed by the NDRF team to detect possible signs of life underneath the debris.

"We are following the cries for help coming from under the debris. At the same time, we are assuring the trapped people that they will be rescued soon," a Kolkata Police official said.

"Deploying immediately after a distress call from the civil administration, a specialised team of Army rescue personnel, specialist engineers and medical personnel are assisting in rescue efforts," the army posted on X.

Stating that in coordination with NDRF, SDRF and Kolkata Police, the Indian Army said that its personnel were sparing no effort to find several people believed to be trapped under heavy concrete debris.

Control room numbers -- 1070, 8697981070, 033-22143526/22535185 -- of the Disaster Management Group were opened at the state secretariat in the wake of the incident.

"Words fail to express my sorrow for the precious lives lost in this tragedy. My deepest condolences go out to their bereaved families. The State Government stands firmly with them in this hour of unimaginable grief and we will extend all possible support to them," Adhikari said, taking to social media.

Lauding the coordinated rescue operations taking place on war footing, the CM said the Army, NDRF, SDRF, Kolkata Police and KMC are jointly conducting the rescue operations to ensure every trapped worker is brought to safety as quickly

as possible and wished quick recovery of the injured.

Some locals alleged that large-scale illegal construction activities had been carried out in the area for some time.

"We will definitely look into the causes of the accident and whether there were any irregularities. But right now, the priority is to rescue as many victims as possible," Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Indranil Khan said.

Officials of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation present at the site opined that there was prima facie evidence of design and construction flaws that may have led to the collapse.

"It seems that the iron beams weren't strong enough to hold the weight of the overhead concrete. Also, standing here, I cannot see any braces which are required to support the RCC casting. We will have to check whether the design of the structure was approved by the civic body and, if it was, whether work was being carried out as per the requirements of the approved design," a structural engineer present at the spot said.

Municipal Affairs Minister Agnimitra Paul, Health Minister Sharadwat Mukherjee and Industry Minister Tapas Roy, along with Kolkata Municipal Commissioner Smita Pandey, were also seen on the ground.

Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Nand also oversaw rescue operations at the site. (Agencies)

5-min walk break every hour feasible, effective in offsetting harms of prolonged sitting: Study

NEW DELHI, JUNE 24: A five-minute walking break every hour strikes the best balance between feasibility and effectiveness in mitigating health harms of sitting for long durations, according to a study conducted in real-world settings.

Effects of the brief breaks, which include a boost in mood and lessening of fatigue, do not undermine work performance and suggest that the measures can be included in public health strategy and physical activity guidelines, findings published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine indicate.

Being sedentary for a prolonged time has emerged as a significant public health concern with associated risks including a heightened

chance of developing obesity, diabetes and heart disease, among other chronic conditions. Risks can also involve early death.

Researchers, including those from Columbia University Medical Center in the US, said that while brief, regular movement breaks have been proposed as a public health strategy to offset the harms of prolonged sedentary behaviour, real-world viability of the intervention is unclear.

Data of more than 19,300 adults who took part in an interactive 'Body Electric Challenge' organised by the US National Public Radio (NPR) was analysed.

Nearly 60 per cent, or 11,484, of all the participants -- who spanned across a wide

range of ages, occupations and work environments -- took 5-minute walking breaks at a self-selected break frequency of either 30, 60, or 120 minutes for 14 days straight, preceded by seven days of their usual routine.

A daily email survey throughout the 21-day period assessed changes in fatigue, mood, and work performance of the participants.

"In this large-scale, pragmatic intervention, movement breaks demonstrated good implementation potential and effectiveness for improving psychosocial outcomes over the two-week intervention period. Hourly breaks offered the best balance between feasibility and effectiveness," the authors

wrote.

"These findings support movement breaks as a potentially viable public health strategy to reduce the harms of prolonged sedentary behaviour," they said.

Implementation potential of the intervention was assessed using the Feasibility, Acceptability and Appropriateness of Intervention Measures' questionnaire.

Analysis of the survey results showed that all three break frequencies -- 30, 60 and 120 minutes -- were rated as feasible, acceptable, and appropriate, indicating an implementation potential. Feasibility was found to be higher at lower break frequencies, while acceptability and appropriateness were high across all three.

succumbed to his injuries. The NIA, which took over the investigation from the local police in April 2024, found that Asfar and Entajul were allegedly controlling the bomb-making operation, and the bombs were intended for use to threaten and terrorise people in the area.

Amta bomb blast case: NIA arrests two prime accused in West Bengal

NEW DELHI, JUN 24: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested two accused following searches in West Bengal's Amta area in connection with a 2022 bomb blast that killed one person involved in manufacturing the explosives and injured three others.

Asfar Middy and Entajul Middy, both residents of the Amta area in Howrah district, were arrested on Tuesday night after the NIA conducted searches at three suspected hideouts linked to the accused.

The duo has been identified as the prime accused who allegedly directed the il-

legal manufacture of crude bombs near Chandrapur Bazar in the Amta police station area on February 23, 2022. Some of the bombs that were being manufactured had exploded, severely injuring Jihadhar Mollah, Mohabbat Mollah, Moinar Rahaman and Sk Maharam. Of these, Sk Maharam later

transferred from her bank account on May 26. The complainant told police that she had neither authorised the transactions nor shared any banking credentials with anyone.

NEW DELHI, JUNE 24: The Delhi Police has busted a racket involved in supplying mule bank accounts and channelling proceeds of cyber fraud, arresting four persons from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, an officer said on Wednesday.

The accused have been identified as Faehm Bag (26), Shubham Goyal (27), Deepak Parjapat (28) and Manoj Kumar Tailor (39).

The case came to light after a 31-year-old woman from Wazirabad reported that Rs 1 lakh had been fraudulently

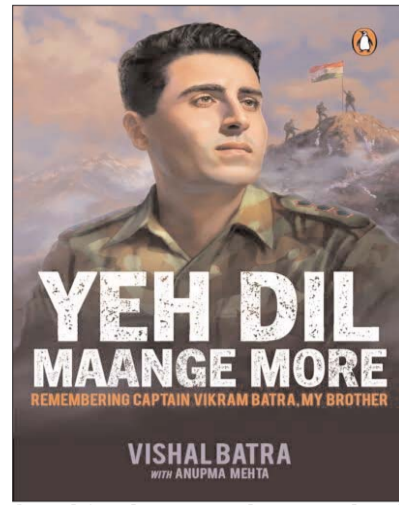
'Yeh Dil Maange More'

Vishal Batra remembers Kargil hero brother Vikram Batra through new book

NEW DELHI, JUN 24: Penguin Random House India (PRHI) on Wednesday announced the publication of "Yeh Dil Maange More: Remembering Captain Vikram Batra, My Brother", a moving and intimate tribute to one of India's most celebrated military heroes. South Asians & Diaspora

Written by Vishal Batra, the identical twin brother of Captain Vikram Batra, along with Anupma Mehta, the book offers readers a rare glimpse into the life, values, and legacy of the Kargil War hero through the eyes of those who knew him best.

The book, scheduled for release under PRHI's 'Veer' imprint, will hit the stands in July. Captain Batra died fighting Pakistani forces during the Kargil war in 1999 at the age of 24. He was given the highest wartime gallantry award Param Vir Chakra posthumously. Revered across generations for his extraordinary bravery and remem-



bered for the iconic phrase, 'Yeh Dil Maange More', once a famous slogan of a beverage company, that later became synonymous with his spirit, his story and continues to inspire millions of Indians.

In "Yeh Dil Maange More", accord-

ing to the publisher, Vishal Batra recounts memories of growing up alongside his twin brother in Palampur, tracing their shared childhood, aspirations and unbreakable bond.

"The book goes beyond the battlefield to reveal the person behind the uniform-his warmth, determination, sense of humour and deep commitment to those around him," reads the description of the book.

Described as "part memoir, part tribute, and part celebration" of an enduring legacy, the book also reflects on the profound impact Captain Vikram Batra's life and sacrifice had on his family, his comrades and the nation.

"Through personal anecdotes and reflections, readers are invited to understand the man behind the legend and the values that continue to resonate long after his passing," they added.

The Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed on July 26 every year to mark India's victory in the 1999 war. (PTI)

CRPF Suspends DIG For Sharing Messages Opposing CAPF Bill

NEW DELHI, JUN 24: The CRPF has suspended a senior DIG-rank officer for sharing content allegedly "against" the government during the recent passage of the CAPF bill, which the cadre officers of these forces had called discriminatory.

This is the first such case among the approximately 15,000 cadre officers entrusted with leadership roles in the country's 10-lakh-strong Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Officials identified the officer who faced action as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) B C Patra, posted at the force's Tripura Sector headquarters in Agartala.

The 1994-batch CRPF cadre officer returned to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in April after completing a deputation posting with the federal counter-terrorist commando force NSG.

Officials said Patra was suspended a few days ago under Sub-Rule (1) of Rule 10 of the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965 pending a preliminary enquiry.

They said the charges in-

volve sharing audio-visual and pictorial content on social media platforms that allegedly called for "changing" the country's lawfully elected government during the passage of the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill 2026.

The bill is now an Act after it received presidential assent in April.

CRPF Director General (DG) G P Singh confirmed the development to PTI.

"All serving and uniformed officers of the CRPF are bound by the rules and statutes and the oath taken.

"Any word(s) - written or spoken or action contravening the same would be dealt appropriately in consonance with the law of the land," the DG said.

Patra could not be contacted for comment.

However, officers privy to the case said the action against the DIG was "mala fide" and "unjustified".

They said the officer (Patra) is being targeted because he was the lead petitioner among the CAPF cadre officers who fought cases related

to their promotions and service parity with the IPS up to the Supreme Court.

"The DIG is being unfairly treated and punished by the CRPF headquarters because he led the legal battle for the rightful claims of the cadre officers on par with the Indian Police Service (IPS) officers who join the CAPFs on deputation," a senior officer said on the condition of anonymity.

He claimed that about two dozen other officers of the force who prominently fought court cases were recently issued "hasty" posting orders.

An association of ex-CAPF officers has also called a press conference on July 2 against the "hasty and illegal" suspension of the DIG, in addition to targeting CAPF personnel whose families protested the CAPF Bill at the Rajghat in the national capital in April.

"DIG Patra is an outstanding officer who has been commended with multiple awards," said Ranbir Singh, general secretary of the Alliance of All Ex Paramilitary

Forces Welfare Association (AAPWA) said.

In their representations sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), serving cadre officers stated that the Bill's provisions were "oppressive" and "discriminatory" and that they would continue to stagnate in their current ranks if IPS deputations were not curtailed as directed by the Supreme Court in an order issued last year.

The Centre filed an appeal against this order which the apex court rejected.

The government said the bill seeks to create a unified legal framework governing the service conditions of personnel across the CAPFs, replacing the current patchwork of separate service rule regimes for cadre officers and those coming on deputation from the Indian Police Service (IPS).

MHA officers have said that the deputation of IPS officers in CAPFs was a "valid requirement" as they are an all-India service and play supervisory role in the state police organisations too. (Agencise)

Opposition Trying To Defame Me, Says Mann; Claims His Fake Videos Being Released

CHANDIGARH, Jun 24: Amid the video row, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Wednesday rejected allegations that the forensic report that gave a clean chit to him was fabricated and lashed out at the opposition parties, alleging that they have joined hands to defame him.

Mann's remarks came a day after the Haryana Police arrested two men on a complaint regarding alleged procurement of a fabricated forensic report related to a viral video linked to the controversy involving him.

In a video message, the AAP leader said for the past several days, his fake videos were being released. "When they could not find anything, they are trying to defame me on the religious front," he said, targeting the Congress, BJP and the Akali Dal.

He reiterated his stance that it was not him in the purported objectionable video, claiming that the person who is seen in the clip does not match his height and physique.

"By making that video viral, I was declared guilty," he said.

Mann said he received calls from many people who are convinced that it was a fake video.

"By scaring the lab owners with the registration of FIR and torturing or threatening them, they want to get a statement from them to claim that money was taken for preparing fabricated reports," claimed Mann.

He alleged that the Congress, Akalis and the BJP have come together with a sole motive of defaming him.

"Neither they are able to show their faces socially nor politically in Punjab. They have

now decided to defame me on religious grounds," he said, claiming that every day, his fake videos were being released on their social media handles.

"I am your person and I will continue to work this way," he said and listed measures taken by his government like free electricity, water and giving jobs.

"It does not affect me as long as you are with me," he said.

Lashing out at the Congress, Akali Dal and the BJP, he said these parties have a formed "sanjha morcha" as they cannot compete him politically.

Accusing the opposition of being arrogant, he said they have no issue against him and cannot tolerate the huge gatherings at his public interaction programmes.

"You (the public) have to decide. I firmly stand by Punjab,"

he asserted.

The Haryana Police on Tuesday arrested two men after registering a case on a complaint by a person who alleged that he was approached for procuring a fabricated forensic report of a viral video linked to the controversy involving the Punjab chief minister.

The development came amid a political storm triggered by the alleged objectionable video over which the Akal Takht, the supreme temporal body of Sikhs, had issued an edict against Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on June 15.

The edict came as Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj claimed that the video - purportedly showing a man resembling Mann - was found to be "authentic" by the two forensic laboratories.

Shubham allegedly persuaded Faem to provide his bank account in exchange for a commission of Rs 2,000.

"The account details were then passed through Manoj to another associate, enabling the transfer of cyber fraud proceeds into the account," the officer said.

Police found that the entire Rs 1 lakh was withdrawn through a cheque on the same day it was credited. The money was subsequently distributed among the accused after deducting commissions at various stages, police said.

Mule bank account racket busted; four held in Rs 1 lakh cyber fraud case

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