

## F-35s LATER, DEPORTEE PLANES ARRIVE FIRST

### Tales of humiliation pour out as Indian immigrants reach home

**PTI, CHANDIGARH:** Even as India agrees to purchase the F-35 fighter jets from the US, illegal Indian immigrants in the US continue to be deported - handcuffed, chained and humiliated - in military aircrafts.

The mass deportations come despite high-level diplomatic engagements between India and the US. In fact, Prime Minister Modi was in the United States to meet President Donald Trump just as the second batch was ready to be deported. Earlier, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar too had given assurances that he had raised concerns with the US about the treatment of deportees after the first batch arrived on Feb 5, in distressing conditions.

These deportations, and in that fashion, highlight the grim reality that diplo-



**Mandeep Singh, who was among the immigrants deported from the US, speaks to the media, in Amritsar, Monday**

matic ties and arms deals do not translate into humane treatment for illegal Indian migrants.

The dream of a better future has turned into a nightmare for hundreds of Indian migrants as they

were deported from the United States. Over the past two weeks, multiple flights carrying Indian deportees have landed at Amritsar airport, bringing back men who risked everything to seek a better life abroad but instead returned broken, financially devastated and finally humiliated. Many deportees have complained of being handcuffed and chained during the flight, while Sikh men were allegedly asked to remove their turbans.

Mandeep Singh, one of the Indians to be deported, shared his ordeal of the roundtrip journey from Amritsar to the US and back.

Promised a legal entry into the US, Mandeep Singh's life was at risk after he was made to deal with crocodiles and snakes, trim his beard despite being a Sikh, and having to go without

food for days.

But his dream to secure a better life for his family in Amritsar came crashing down on January 27 when he was arrested by the US Border Patrol while trying to sneak into America via Tijuana in Mexico.

The third batch of 112 deportees reached Amritsar on Sunday night.

Speaking to reporters, Mandeep (38) showed several videos of the perilous journey his travel agent and sub-agents put him through.

Instead of a legal entry as promised, Mandeep's travel agent put him on the 'donkey route' -- an illegal and risky pathway used by migrants to enter the US. Many more deportees from Punjab shared ordeals similar to Mandeep's.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

## KUMBH THERE, CLEAN-UP HERE



Cleaning work underway at the Yamuna river, in New Delhi, on Monday. Yamuna cleaning work had dominated the headlines in the run-up to Delhi polls, as the river's pollution is an emotive issue in the national Capital

## McLaughlin murder: Killer gets life, family finds closure

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The sensational eight-year trial in the Danielle McLaughlin rape-murder came to a close on Monday, with the Additional District and Sessions Court, Margao, sentencing 34-year-old Vikat Bhagat to rigorous life imprisonment.

Irish-British national McLaughlin, originally from County Donegal, Ireland, was 28 years old when she was brutally murdered in Canacona, Goa, on March 14, 2017. McLaughlin, who had traveled to Goa as part of a backpacking trip, was discovered dead in a secluded field in Deubaug, Canacona, the day after the crime.

**"I lost my eldest daughter, she was stolen from us, she was stolen from her sisters and friends... She was also stolen the opportunity of becoming a mother herself"**  
- Andrea Brannigan, Danielle's mother, speaking to BBC

Along with the murder conviction, the court also sentenced Bhagat to a separate term of rigorous life imprisonment for raping McLaughlin.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

## Sancoale p'yat rocked by corruption claims

### Opposition panchayat members claim bills worth crores are being passed without due process

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The stink of corruption that has dogged the Sancoale village panchayat for the past many months came into focus yet again on Monday, with two opposition panchayat members and several villagers submitting a memorandum to the Director of Panchayats and accusing the ruling panchayat group of illegalities and mismanagement of public funds.

**"A meeting with over 300 agenda points was concluded within three months, and Rs 85 lakh worth of bills were approved in a so-called 'ghost meeting' without any discussion or deliberations"**

- Tulshidas Naik, panchayat member

The memorandum was filed by Panchayat members Tulshidas Naik and Maurelio Carvalho, who claimed that the deputy sarpanch and the gram sevak, acting as the panchayat secretary, were engaged in unlawful practices. The duo said they were prepared to present evidence in court to support their allegations and demanded action.

Naik highlighted that

## 'IRREGULAR' LAWYER FEES FLAGGED OFF IN AUDIT REPORT LAST YEAR

**PANJIM:** The Sancoale panchayat had been in the eye of a storm in November last year, when an audit report has revealed that the Panchayat paid close to Rs 10 lakh as legal fees to Advocate Zeller C De Sousa with no financial approvals or an agreement of engagement, either on a retainerhip or a case-to-case basis.

The audit has observed that the panchayat paid Rs 9,55,550 to Adv De Sousa for representing five cases during the last financial year. The auditor further objected that there was no agreement between the Sancoale Village Panchayat and the lawyer and the panchayat had not attained final approval for paying the amount.

The amount was released to the lawyer without proper bills while the reason for releasing the payment without financial approval and not executing an agreement has not been replied to, by the village panchayat, stated the audit report.

**"We will submit the proof of these illegalities to the court and ensure that those involved in corruption are held accountable"**

- Maurelio Carvalho, panchayat member

**"We don't approve any bills without including them in the agenda... For the last three-and-a-half months, an ordinary meeting was not held, but everything has been done in accordance with the rules"**

- Derrick Vales, Deputy Sarpanch

the panchayat had failed to convene a single meeting in the past six months, raising concerns about the lack of transparency. He accused the ruling group of passing significant financial decisions without due process. "A meeting with over 300 agenda points was concluded within three months, and Rs 85 lakh worth of bills were approved in a so-called 'ghost meeting' without any discussion or deliberations," Naik alleged.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

## American dream dashed, future tense for Sarzora youth

### Grappling with financial struggles, family can't digest their son's deportation; calls grow for govt to intervene

Team Herald

**MARGAO:** The hamlet of Sarzora is in a state of shock following the return of its son, who was recently deported from the United States.

The youth, whose dreams to lead a better life stand shattered, has returned home to his family members, who are already grappling with financial struggles and health issues.

The youth's return has stirred emotions within the tight-knit community, with many shocked to learn about the incident only after his arrival. O Herald spoke to residents, who are close to the deported youth's family, offering a glimpse into his character and circumstances.

The young man, described by neighbours as hardworking, had gone to America in search of a better future—not only for himself, but for his struggling family. However, his journey ended abruptly at the US border, his dreams of success dashed.

### HOPES CRUSHED

**"Neighbours said the hardworking youth had gone to America in search of a better future - not only for himself, but for his struggling family"**

**"His journey ended abruptly at the US border, his dreams of success dashed"**

**"Enduring the brutal hardships of being smuggled by human traffickers, his hopes were abruptly crushed before he could even step on US soil"**

**"The failed bid has left him facing a stark and uncertain future, while his family deals with the emotional fallout"**

His path to America was fraught with danger. Enduring the brutal hardships of being smuggled by human traffickers, his hopes were abruptly

**"Yes, the family is facing severe financial hardships. The youth had gone abroad hoping to provide for them. The lack of job opportunities in Goa and India pushes many young people to seek work abroad, often through illegal means"**

- Sabita Vas, Sarzora panchayat member

**"The positive relations between the BJP government at the Centre and the US government could potentially pave the way for a solution. A cooperative effort between the two governments could provide much-needed relief to the families of Goans working illegally abroad"**

- Cruz Silva, Velim MLA

crushed before he could even step on US soil. The failed attempt has left him facing a stark and uncertain future, while his family back home deals with the emotional fallout.

Speaking to O Herald about the family's dire situation, Sarzora panchayat member Sabita Vas, said, "Yes, the family is facing severe financial hardships. The youth had gone abroad hoping to provide for them."

She added that the family is now in a state of distress, unable to digest the reality of their son's deportation.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

Highlighting a significant issue facing many Goan youth, Sabita explained that the lack of job opportunities in Goa and India pushes many young people to seek work abroad, often through illegal means.

"The Indian government must address the root cause of this issue, where young people are forced to resort to illegal channels to find employment overseas. There must be simpler, more accessible legal routes for those seeking work abroad," she said.

## Sudin Dhavalikar & Lavoo Mamledar: A friendship that went beyond politics

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** In a world where political allegiances often shift and former friends become rivals, the longstanding friendship between Power Minister Ramakrishna 'Sudin' Dhavalikar and the late former MLA Lavoo Mamledar remained steadfast, despite their political differences over the years.

Paying his final respects to Mamledar at Ponda on Sunday, Dhavalikar, visibly emotional, reflected on the decades-long friendship he shared with the late leader, recalling their childhood and college days together. "Lavoo was not just my childhood friend at Almeida High School in Ponda, but also my companion during college. After securing his degree in BSc, Lavoo worked briefly as a teacher before joining the Goa Police Department as a Sub-Inspector in 1981. He later rose to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police," Dhavalikar reminisced.



Dhavalikar also highlighted how Mamledar, at his personal request, left his secure career in the police service to enter politics. "In 2007, for the sake of our friendship, Lavoo resigned from his position as DySP and contested against former Chief Minister Ravi Naik in Ponda on the MGP symbol, though he did not win," Dhavalikar said. However, in a turn of political fate, Mamledar emerged victorious in the 2012 elections, defeating Naik and becoming a major political force. Despite facing tensions with



some leaders within the MGP, Mamledar stood by his friend Dhavalikar, never seeking a ministerial position, even as both Dhavalikar brothers were sworn in as ministers. Dhavalikar mentioned that although there were allegations from certain sections of society, particularly about Mamledar not being offered a ministerial post despite his Bahujan Samaj background, Mamledar always insisted that he was never interested in such roles and did not want them to affect their personal bond.

However, after Mamledar lost the 2017 elections to Ravi Naik, political differences began to surface. Mamledar eventually left the MGP and joined other political parties. Despite this, Dhavalikar emphasized that their personal friendship remained intact until the end.

The political divide between the two became more evident when Mamledar quit the Trinamool Congress (TMC) following its alliance with the MGP. Mamledar also contested the 2019 by-election, campaigning against Sudin's younger brother, Deepak Dhavalikar, and later challenged his expulsion from the MGP. In 2022, Mamledar unsuccessfully contested against Sudin Dhavalikar in his stronghold of Marcaim constituency.

Though their paths diverged politically, Dhavalikar made it clear that his friendship with Mamledar transcended the political arena, remembering him as a true friend until the very end.

## Shallow earthquake jolts NCR, alert for aftershocks



Residents rush out of their houses as earthquake tremors hit Delhi-NCR, in New Delhi, early Monday morning

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Strong tremors were felt in the national capital and adjoining regions as an earthquake of 4.0 magnitude struck the region early on Monday.

There were no immediate reports of any damage or injuries.

The epicentre of the quake was in the Jheel Park area of Dhaula Kuan and there were some reports of people hearing a loud sound as the ground shook.

The National Center for Seismology said the earth-

quake struck at a focal depth of five kilometres at 5:36 am. Shallow earthquakes, originating five or 10 kilometres below the surface, tend to cause more damage than those originating deep below the surface.

The Jheel Park region has been experiencing smaller, low-magnitude quakes once every two to three years. It recorded an earthquake of 3.3 magnitude in 2015, an official said.

Cont on Pg 9 >>

MAX. TEMP 36.0 °C  
MIN. TEMP 21.2 °C

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