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Driver of Merc involved in accident finally arrested

Thanks to public pressure, police act against Suvidh Chordia, who allegedly tried to escape after causing a serial accident and caused a man's death



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Eyewitnesses in Indiranagar say Suvidh Chordia's Mercedes Benz crashed into a parked Maruti Alto, which in turn hit a Swift, which then rammed into a Tata Ace mini-truck. DH Photos BY B K Janardhan

DH PIC



Thanks to public outrage, the driver of the luxury car that ran amok and caused the death of a man in Indiranagar has finally been arrested. Suvidh Chordia, 43, was produced in court on Monday, a full five days after the accident. He was granted bail right away.

Chordia, driving a Mercedes Benz, allegedly took a U-turn at high speed and caused a series of accidents, killing Harimahanta (age 36), and injuring six others.

Owner of a real estate business, Chordia lives on the ground floor of a building in Defence Colony, and has rented out two floors above.

“There was a delay in arresting him because he was undergoing treatment at Manipal Hospital. We took him into custody as soon as he was discharged,” says K M Shantharaju, deputy commissioner of police (traffic).

B R Ravikanthe Gowda, joint commissioner of police (traffic), says Chordia took a turn and hit a two-wheeler and knocked down its rider. “Eyewitnesses say he panicked and tried to escape from the scene, crashing into a parked Maruti Alto, which in turn hit a Swift. The car rammed into a Tata Ace mini-truck. Chordia then took a sharp right and hit two autos parked nearby,” he says.

A senior officer investigating the case says, “We are examining CCTV cameras in the vicinity and questioning witnesses to understand what went wrong. This is part of

gathering evidence. Chordia says he fell unconscious at the wheel, a claim hard to believe,” he says.

Residents of Indiranagar demonstrated on Friday, with many wondering how the police were sympathetic to the driver and not to the victims.

Indirani Chaudhary, a resident of Defence Colony, says, “An innocent man has lost his life and five others are injured. The police must act. Only swift action will stop others with similar tendencies.” Sukidha Nivas, another resident of the area, says, “People who flaunt their wealth and power on the streets must be dealt with harshly.”

A lawyer who was among the protesters says Chordia could still get away if the police fail to present strong evidence in court.

‘RECKLESS DRIVING SHOULD BE A NON-BAILABLE OFFENCE’

The Bengaluru traffic police are more interested in collecting fines and bribes than in making roads safe, alleges Ravi Krishna Reddy, president, Karnataka Rashtra Samithi, a political outfit that is actively campaigning against corruption in government offices.

He believes reckless driving should be treated as a non-bailable offence.

New app for speedy investigation

N Shivakumar, transport commissioner, says the police can recommend suspension or cancellation of the licences of errant drivers. “So far we have not got anything from the police when it comes to the Indiranagar incident,” he told Metrolife. The Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) Project, launched by the ministry of road transport and highways, helps find the cause of accidents. “It is a unified app where the police department, transport officials, and health and PWD officials can key in their inputs about every case. When data is correctly collated, analysis becomes quicker and aids speedy investigation,” he says.

‘Educate drivers’

Ashish Verma, professor and convenor, IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab, says the driver licensing process must include training on good driving habits. “There was a visible delay in arresting Suvidh. Is it because he was driving a Mercedes and the police feared that he may be an influential person? Would they extend the same courtesy to a common person? These questions beg answers,” he says.