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Safe Guard: A Safety App

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Abstract: Safe Guard is a mobile app designed to enhance user safety through real-time GPS tracking, emergency alerts, and seamless communication with trusted contacts and authorities. The app enables live location sharing with family members during travel and facilitates one-tap emergency notifications to nearby police departments, providing coordinates and contact details. Additional features include offline SMS-based location sharing, police updates, and a unified platform for safety operations. Built with Flutter and Firebase, SafeGuard ensures cross-platform compatibility and secure backend support. This paper details the app's design, development, and evaluation, comparing it to similar applications like Athena and Abhaya.

Keywords: *Personal Safety, Emergency Alert, Flutter, Firebase, GPS Tracking, Real-Time Communication, Police Integration.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's unpredictable world, personal safety has become a paramount concern for individuals and families. SafeGuard is an innovative app designed to connect users with close contacts, such as family members, and nearby police departments based on live location sharing. This all-in-one safety solution ensures users can confidently travel, knowing their loved ones are always informed of their whereabouts.

SafeGuard enables users to share their live location with family members continuously while traveling. In emergencies, users can instantly notify nearby police departments with a single tap, sharing their live location, phone number, and coordinates for rapid assistance. This ensures a quick response during critical situations, significantly improving user safety.

A standout feature of SafeGuard is its ability to provide community news based on the user's current location. Users receive updates about local events, safety alerts, and potential hazards, enhancing situational awareness. Additionally, the app includes an alert system where police departments can broadcast updates to users within their jurisdiction. For offline scenarios, SafeGuard facilitates location sharing via SMS, ensuring safety measures remain effective even without internet connectivity.

To streamline operations, SafeGuard offers a unified platform for police agencies in India. A dedicated app for police departments allows them to receive alerts when users enter their jurisdiction while sharing their location with law enforcement. This promotes efficient coordination between police stations, ensuring smooth safety operations and effective communication.

Built using Flutter for cross-platform compatibility and Firebase for real-time backend support, SafeGuard delivers a robust, seamless user experience. Flutter's versatile framework ensures a consistent and responsive interface across devices, while Firebase's secure database and cloud infrastructure handle real-time data management and communication. This technological foundation ensures SafeGuard remains reliable, scalable, and secure.

The dual-app system—one for users and another for police departments—enhances the app's effectiveness in addressing safety challenges. With features like real-time tracking, SMS-based updates, community news, and seamless coordination with law enforcement, SafeGuard empowers users to navigate the world with confidence and peace of mind. Its comprehensive safety features make it an indispensable tool for modern personal security.

II. RELATED WORK

Safety applications that can aid an individual have been in the spotlight lately, especially targeting women. Various apps are created to provide instant emergency alerts, trace where you are, and let you speak to whom you trust when you need help. While these applications share similar purposes, their functions, technologies used, and performances are different. Here is a brief summary of some critical safety apps:

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A. Athena [1]

This smartphone application aims to increase women's safety by providing location-based alerts to predefined contacts. Users can activate the emergency system by pressing a distress button or using voice commands, which shares the user's GPS location and alerts nearby authorities. Developed for Android, Athena also includes features like video and photo capturing and direct calls to police. However, the app heavily depends on a working mobile network and may face delays during emergencies. SafeGuard improves upon Athena by utilizing Firebase for real-time data synchronization, ensuring faster and more reliable updates.

B. GPS-based Location Tracking System [2]

This system tracks the real-time location of individuals using GPS technology on Android devices. It includes features like proximity notifications and tracking multiple users. Developed using tools like JSON and the LAMP stack, this app provides location data to enhance monitoring efficiency. However, it lacks integration with emergency services. SafeGuard surpasses this system by integrating location tracking with emergency alerts and communication tools for real-world crisis management.

C. WoSApp [3]

WoSApp addresses the challenges of discreetly contacting the police during emergencies. By shaking the phone or pressing a panic button, users can trigger an emergency call, sharing their location and contact information with authorities. This application prioritizes user privacy and ensures secure communication. However, its reliance on manual activation may delay response times. SafeGuard adds automated processes and features like continuous live tracking, proactive notifications, and seamless police integration, improving overall safety outcomes.

D. Abhaya [4]

Abhaya is an Android app designed to enhance women's safety through features like continuous GPS location updates and emergency messaging to pre-registered contacts and local police. The app provides regular updates to specified contacts every five minutes until a stop feature is activated. However, its reliance on periodic updates via SMS makes it less effective in areas with weak network coverage. SafeGuard addresses this limitation by using Firebase Cloud Messaging and Google Maps to provide real-time, uninterrupted updates, regardless of network strength.

E. SafeStreet [5]

SafeStreet is a community-driven app aimed at combating street harassment by documenting incidents and recommending safer routes. Users can report harassment discreetly, and the app uses location-based data to suggest paths with lower risk. However, SafeStreet primarily focuses on mapping and reporting incidents rather than real-time crisis response. SafeGuard's proactive alert system and integration with local authorities provide a more immediate and comprehensive solution for user safety.

F. SOS [6]

The SOS app enables users to raise alarms during emergencies by sending pre-set messages and emails with the user's last recorded location. It also archives location data for later retrieval. While effective for historical tracking, SOS lacks features like direct police integration and real-time updates. SafeGuard bridges this gap by allowing one-tap location sharing with police departments and ensuring timely intervention.

G. StreetWatch [7]

StreetWatch aims to prevent street crime by providing users with alerts about high-crime areas and guiding them to nearby safe zones or police stations. While it emphasizes awareness, its utility in emergencies is limited to providing static information. SafeGuard's dynamic features, such as live location sharing and coordinated police responses, ensure greater effectiveness in real-time scenarios.

H. Research on Location Tracking through SMS [8]

This study proposes a location-tracking app that shares a user's current address via text messages and maintains location records on a web server. Users can send their coordinates to emergency contacts during critical situations. However, its functionality is limited to offline communication, and it lacks seamless integration with emergency services. SafeGuard enhances this by supporting both offline SMS-based location sharing and real-time updates, ensuring consistent performance in emergencies.

I. Cross-Platform Emergency Reporting [9]

This research focuses on using GIS-based systems for emergency reporting across urban areas. By integrating geolocation data with Google Web Services, the app enables users to report emergencies to appropriate authorities. While it offers features like location logging and reporting, it does not provide proactive features like live tracking and automated emergency notifications. SafeGuard's dual-system approach with real-time tracking and police integration ensures faster and more reliable emergency responses.

J. Privacy-Preserving Location-Based Apps [10]

This app focuses on privacy by using decentralized platforms like openPDS to prevent data exposure. It allows users to participate in location-based activities while keeping personal data private. Although it excels in privacy, it lacks emergency response features. SafeGuard balances privacy with utility by employing end-to-end encryption for sensitive data while prioritizing immediate response capabilities through integrated police coordination.

K. Why SafeGuard is Different

SafeGuard sets itself apart from other safety apps by combining real-time location tracking, seamless communication, and a unified platform for users and police departments. Unlike other apps that rely on periodic updates or manual activation, SafeGuard uses Firebase and Google Maps to provide continuous, real-time updates and automated emergency alerts. Its dual-system approach

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enables efficient coordination between users and local authorities, ensuring timely responses during emergencies.

Additionally, SafeGuard addresses a critical gap in the Indian policing system by providing a unified platform for police departments across states. Currently, different police departments use varying GPS systems, leading to challenges in coordination when users travel across jurisdictions. SafeGuard overcomes this by automatically sharing the user's live location and emergency details with the relevant police department as they move, without requiring manual intervention. This ensures smooth communication and quicker responses, making SafeGuard a comprehensive and practical solution for safety challenges.

III. PROBLEM AND SOLUTION DESCRIPTION

A. Motivation

The safety of individuals, particularly women, is increasingly becoming a global concern. As the number of incidents involving violence, including assault and harassment, continues to rise, the urgency for effective and swift safety measures has become paramount. Although conventional approaches like contacting emergency services or family members for assistance are often slow and unreliable, advancements in mobile technology present fresh avenues for tackling these problems. Nonetheless, numerous current mobile safety applications encounter obstacles such as slow replies, inaccurate GPS tracking, and insufficient real-time interaction, putting users at risk in urgent situations.

This situation underscores the need for a solution that guarantees prompt, dependable communication and precise location sharing, thereby facilitating quicker emergency responses. Additionally, in India, a significant challenge arises from the lack of a unified platform for police departments across states, as different jurisdictions rely on varying GPS systems. This fragmentation complicates coordination when users travel across regions during emergencies. A unified police platform, as offered by SafeGuard, addresses this gap by automatically sharing the user's live location and emergency details with the relevant police department as they move between jurisdictions, ensuring seamless communication and swift response without requiring manual intervention from law enforcement authorities.

B. Problem Statement and Choice of Solution

Present safety applications typically rely on periodic updates, SMS, and local infrastructure, leading to delays in relaying critical information to emergency contacts and authorities. Additionally, many of these apps experience communication lags, especially in areas with underdeveloped network infrastructure, and lack real-time location tracking in case of an accident.

To address these challenges, SafeGuard offers an innovative, real-time, and personalized safety solution. Powered by Firebase, SafeGuard enables seamless synchronization of real-time data, ensuring continuous communication with emergency contacts. The app integrates Google Maps API to provide real-time live location tracking, ensuring that emergency contacts can monitor the user's movements during a crisis, even in remote areas.

SafeGuard also includes multiple methods for triggering emergency responses, including a panic button, allowing users to send alerts discreetly in high-stress situations where direct phone interaction is not possible. To ensure reliable communication, even in areas with weak network signals, SafeGuard leverages Firebase Cloud Messaging. This ensures timely delivery of information, even when the internet connection is unstable or unavailable.

This scalable, online approach overcomes the limitations of traditional safety apps, providing faster, more reliable, and widely applicable solutions for personal safety. SafeGuard features include:

- Live location sharing with trusted contacts.
- One-tap live location sharing with police departments in emergencies.
- Location sharing via SMS in areas with no internet or poor network connectivity.

SafeGuard is designed to be a dependable, real-time personal safety tool for users, no matter where they are.

IV. APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

A. Software Development Process Model

Agile software development methodology was employed in developing SafeGuard so that the authors could bring user feedback into iterative processes, thus constantly improving the application. This, in turn, helped ensure critical safety features were implemented efficiently and effectively. As planned, the app was designed for both iOS and Android so that its functionality is available across multiple platforms.

B. Technologies used

The **SafeGuard** app was developed using a combination of modern, reliable technologies that ensure optimal functionality, security, and scalability across various platforms. The following technologies were employed:

➢ *Flutter:*

Flutter is a powerful, open-source framework for building natively compiled applications for mobile, web, and desktop from a single codebase. It allows developers to create beautiful, high-performance, and highly interactive apps for both iOS and Android with a consistent look and feel across platforms. By using Flutter, SafeGuard benefits from a cross-platform approach, significantly reducing development time while maintaining a seamless user experience. This also ensures that the app's interface is consistent on both Android and iOS devices.

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➢ *Firebase:*

Firebase, developed by Google, serves as the backend infrastructure for SafeGuard, powering several critical features of the app:

- **Real-time Database**: Firebase's real-time database is used to store and sync user data, such as emergency contacts and user settings, across devices. The real-time nature of Firebase ensures that the app remains up-to-date and synchronized, even in dynamic and changing environments, such as during emergencies.
- **Authentication**: Firebase Authentication simplifies the process of verifying users' identities, enabling users to sign in quickly and securely using their phone number, email, or social media accounts. This feature ensures that only authenticated users have access to the app's features.

Firebase offers the scalability and flexibility needed to handle large amounts of real-time data and messaging, making it a perfect fit for the SafeGuard app, where timely and secure communication is paramount.

➢ *Google Maps API:*

The Google Maps API is integrated into the SafeGuard app to provide real-time geolocation and mapping services. This API allows the app to continuously track the user's location and provide precise, dynamic location data that can be shared with emergency contacts and authorities. Key functionalities of the Google Maps API include:

- **Real-time Location Sharing**: The app displays the user's live location on a map, updating it continuously to provide accurate tracking during emergencies.
- **Geolocation and Routing**: The app can calculate the user's current location and share it with others, ensuring emergency contacts and police can track the user's movements if needed.
- **Interactive Maps**: The integration with Google Maps also provides users with a visual interface for navigating through the app, showing locations of emergency contacts and nearby police departments in real time.

By leveraging these technologies, SafeGuard delivers a robust, reliable, and secure app that offers real-time location tracking, secure data communication, and effective emergency response capabilities.

C. System Architecture

The SafeGuard app's design is divided into two primary components: **the user interface (Flutter)** and **the data-processing layer (Firebase)**.

- **User Interface (UI):** The Flutter framework ensures a smooth and consistent interface across both iOS and Android platforms. The user interface includes the following key features:

- **Announcements section** displaying real-time updates about the user's current city.
- **News section** for providing relevant safety information and alerts.
- **Emergency buttons** for immediate action in case of an emergency.
- **Direct SMS buttons** to send emergency messages instantly.
- **Emergency contact list** to quickly access and manage trusted contacts for emergencies.

- **Data Processing:** Firebase powers the app's backend, handling data storage, security, and messaging services. Firebase ensures secure storage of user data and real-time communication between the user and their emergency contacts. By utilizing Firebase's cloud services, each communication is encrypted and delivered instantly, ensuring users are always connected with their contacts during emergencies. Additionally, the app uses Google Maps API to provide constant updates on the user's location, which is securely transmitted through Firebase's cloud communication.

D. User Interface Design

Ease of use has been the most critical factor in the development of the SafeGuard app, which has two separate interfaces: **one for users** and **another for police.** Despite sharing the same name, the user interface is designed to cater to individual users, while the police interface is tailored to law enforcement needs, ensuring quick, intuitive access to essential features during critical situations.

➢ *User App (SafeGuard) UI Design:*

- **Splash Screen with App Logo:** The first screen that appears when the app is launched, displaying the app logo for branding and a smooth entry into the app experience.
- **Registration and Login Sections:** Users are securely verified via Firebase, allowing for easy sign-in using their phone number or new account creation.

➢ *Tabs:*

- **News and Announcements Tab:** Displays real-time news and important safety announcements relevant to the user's location or emergency situations.
- **Connected Contacts Location Tab:** Displays the real-time locations of users' emergency contacts who are also using SafeGuard, allowing users to easily check the whereabouts of their trusted individuals during emergencies. Google Maps is utilized to show these locations on an interactive map.
- **Safety Features Tab:** Includes key safety features, such as the panic buttons and SMS alerts. Users can trigger an emergency panic button, which will notify their contacts and emergency services. The SMS feature allows users to send emergency messages directly via text.
- **Connected Contact List Tab:** A dedicated space where users can manage and access their emergency contacts quickly. This tab ensures that users can easily update and reach out to their chosen contacts during emergencies.

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➢ *Police Platform App (Safe Guard) UI Design:*

- **Splash Screen:** Displays the app logo and transitions to the registration/login page.
- **Registration/Login Page:** Combined page for new user registration or sign-in using Firebase authentication.

➢ *Tabs:*

- **Surveillance Map:** Displays a map with the locations of users in emergencies, allowing police to monitor real-time positions.
- **Alert Tab:** Shows emergency details such as the user's name, coordinates, emergency contact numbers, and phone battery level.
- **Announcements Tab:** Provides updates and announcements from the police department within their jurisdiction.

Both apps are designed with clear sections to ensure smooth navigation and quick access to emergency features.

E. Technical Implementation

The SafeGuard application leverages advanced technologies to provide a robust, scalable, and secure solution for user safety. At its core, it focuses on real-time data processing and seamless location tracking, ensuring secure access for users during emergencies. Below is a detailed breakdown of the technical elements that constitute the SafeGuard application:

➢ *User Interface Development*

The user interface (UI) of SafeGuard is built using Flutter, a powerful, cross-platform framework. Flutter enables the app to deliver a consistent user experience across both Android and iOS platforms, ensuring a unified look and feel. Key features of the UI include:

- **Flexible Layout with Widget System:** Flutter's widget system enables a highly flexible and modular design where UI elements can be encapsulated as reusable components. This approach simplifies the design and maintenance of features such as panic buttons, location sharing, and emergency contact management. It allows for easy updates and additions without disrupting the overall structure of the application.
- **Responsive Screens:** SafeGuard is designed to adapt seamlessly to different screen sizes and resolutions, ensuring a smooth experience for users on various devices. This responsiveness is especially crucial during emergencies when users need quick and easy access to the app's features.
- **State Management with BLoC:** SafeGuard uses the BLoC (Business Logic Component) pattern for state management. This architectural pattern allows for efficient separation of concerns between the UI and business logic. The use of BLoC helps in managing complex state changes, such as real-time location updates and emergency notifications, ensuring smooth data flow throughout the app.
- **SMS Integration:** SafeGuard integrates with Flutter packages like flutter_sms to enable the sending of SMS messages. This allows users to send emergency messages directly to their contacts or emergency services, providing a critical communication channel during emergencies.

➢ *Backend Infrastructure*

The backend of SafeGuard is powered by Firebase, which provides a suite of services such as real-time databases, cloud messaging, and user authentication. Firebase's scalability, real-time capabilities, and security features make it an ideal choice for the app. Here's how Firebase contributes to the app's functionality:

- **Secure Authentication with Firebase Authentication:** Firebase Authentication enables secure sign-ins and registration. Users can register and log in via phone numbers, with Firebase handling OTP generation for identity verification. This ensures that only authorized users can access their emergency contacts and features.
- **Real-Time Database with Cloud Firestore:** SafeGuard uses Cloud Firestore for real-time data storage, where user information, emergency contacts, and location updates are stored. The real-time syncing between users and their contacts ensures that any updates—such as a user's location—are instantly reflected across devices.
- **Real-Time Push Notifications with Firebase Cloud Messaging:** Firebase Cloud Messaging (FCM) is employed to send real-time push notifications to users and their emergency contacts. As soon as a panic button is pressed or an emergency alert is triggered, an immediate notification is sent to all relevant contacts, ensuring they are kept informed during an emergency.

➢ *Google Maps Integration*

Google Maps is integral to SafeGuard for live location tracking and visualization. The app uses the following Google Maps features:

- **Real-Time Location Sharing:** Google Maps tracks the user's location using the device's GPS. The app continuously updates the user's location and transmits this data to Firebase, ensuring real-time location information is shared with emergency contacts.
- **Location Markers:** The user's location is plotted on the map using a dynamic marker. As the user moves, the marker updates to reflect the new position in real time, making it easy for contacts and authorities to track the user's whereabouts.
- **Geofencing and Alerts:** SafeGuard uses geofencing capabilities in Google Maps to create virtual boundaries around specific locations. If a user enters or exits a predetermined area, the app sends an alert to notify emergency contacts or the user, improving safety by providing proactive alerts in potentially dangerous regions.

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V. USE CASE FOR THE APPLICATION

A. User App (Safe Guard) Interface Design:

➢ *Splash Screen*

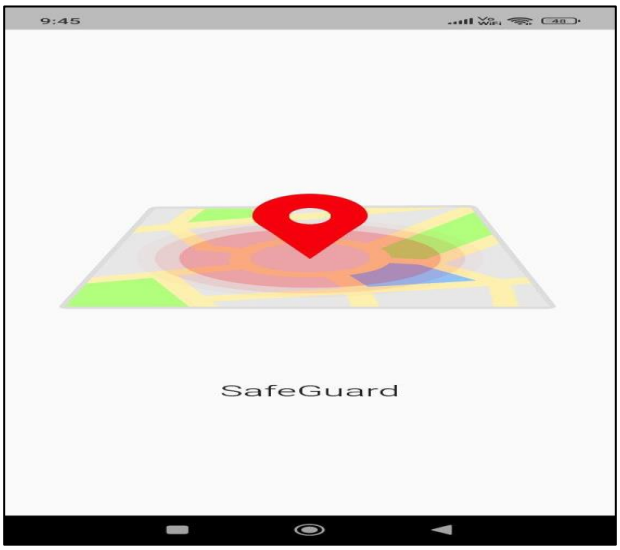

Fig 1: Splash Screen

- Description: The first screen displayed when the app is launched, showing the SafeGuard app logo and transitioning smoothly to the registration/login page. This ensures a clean, professional, and engaging start to the app.

➢ *Registration and Login Sections*

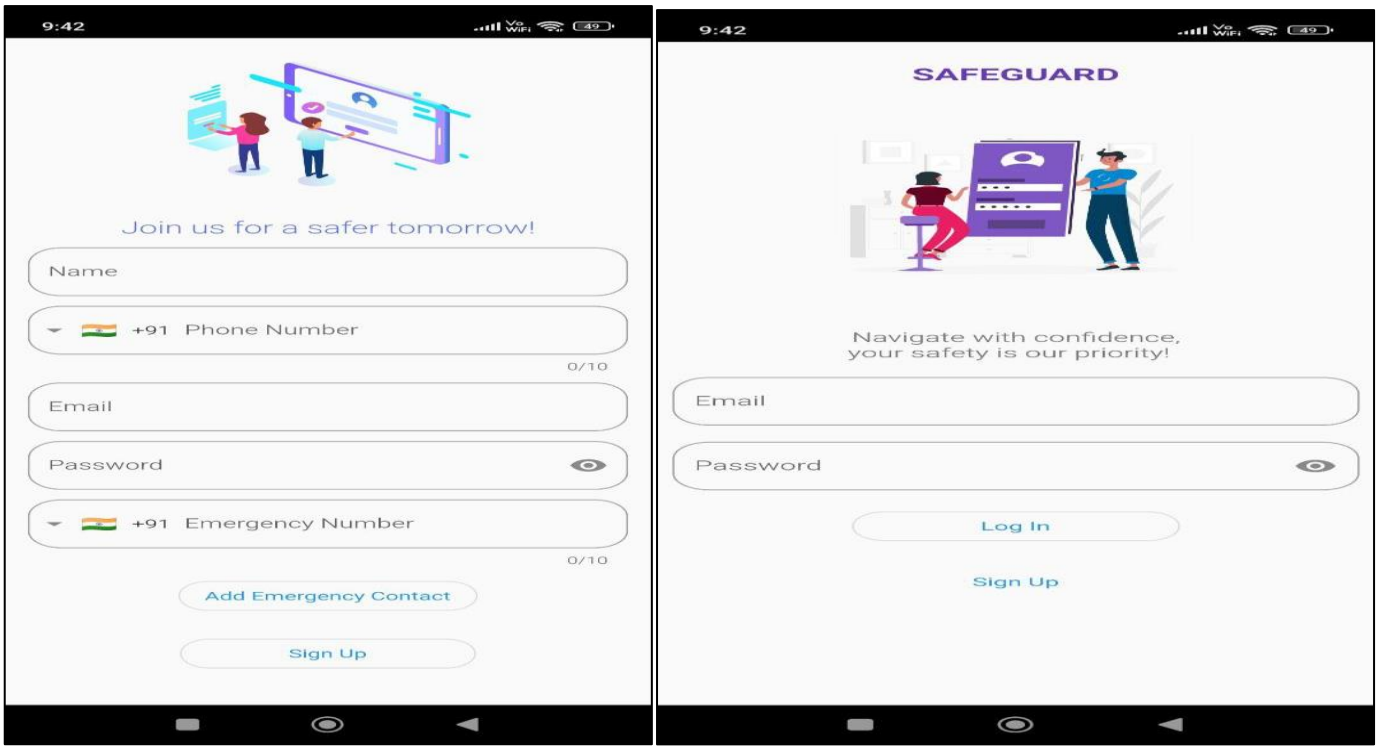

Fig 2: Registration and Login Screens

- Description: Users can securely sign in using Firebase Authentication. They can either log in with their phone number or create a new account. This provides a safe and convenient method for user authentication.

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➢ *News & Announcements Tab*

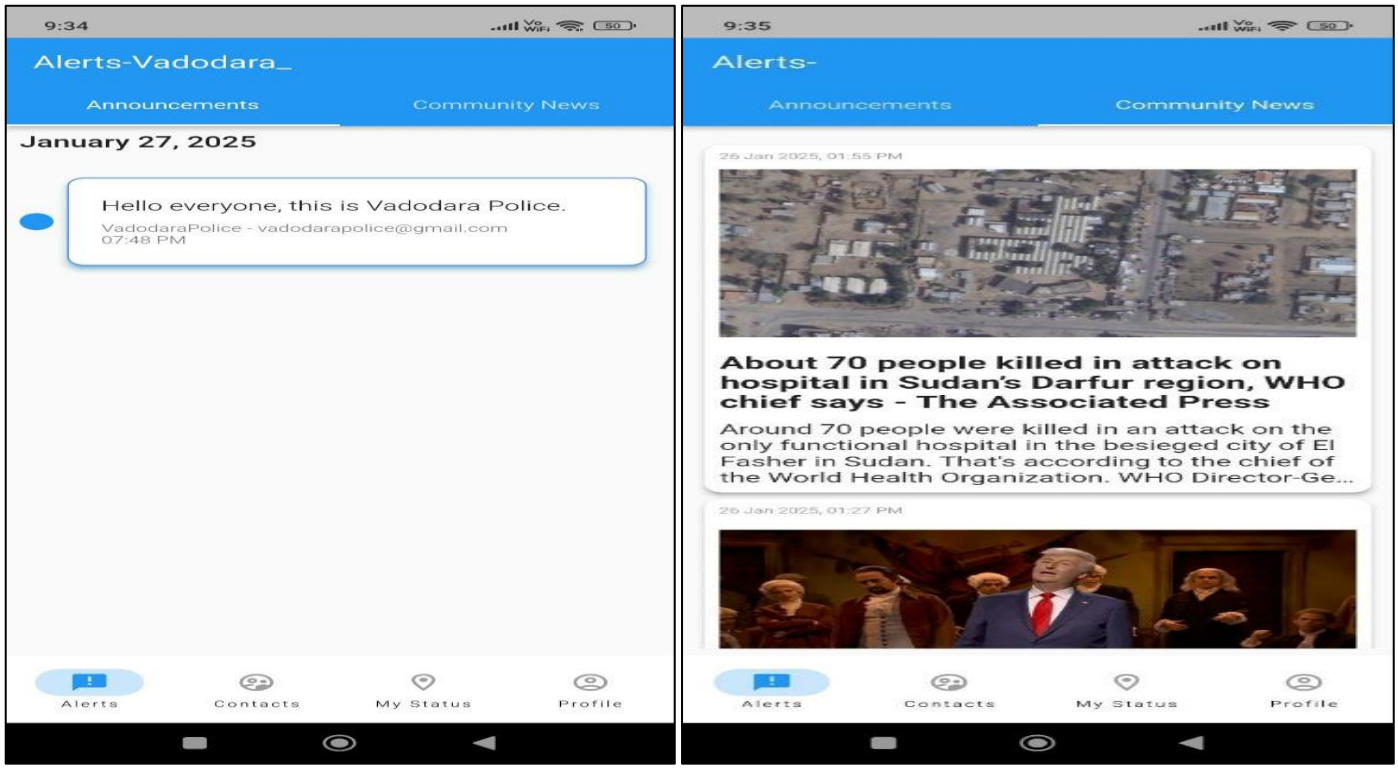

Fig 3: News & Announcements Tab

- Description: This tab delivers real-time safety alerts and important news relevant to the user's current location. It ensures that users stay informed about potential emergencies or safety issues in their area.

➢ *Location Sharing Tab*

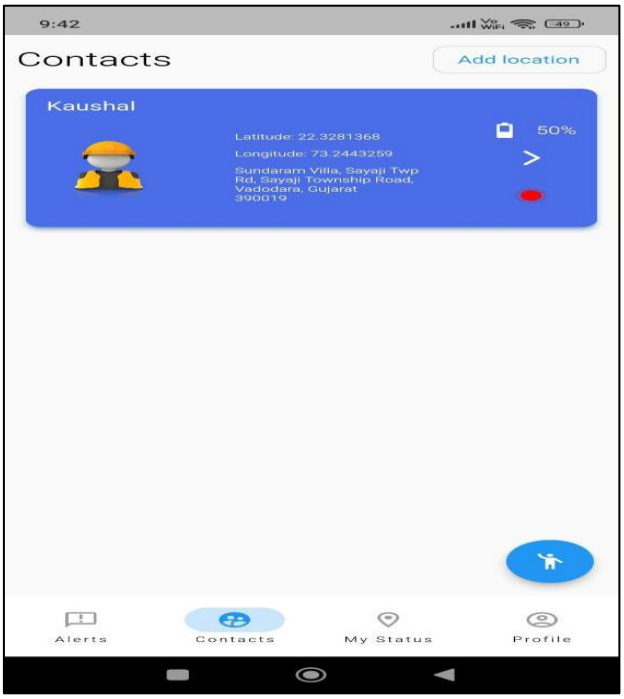

Fig 4: Location Sharing Tab

- Description: Displays live locations of connected users (emergency contacts) on a map. Users can track their contacts' positions, ensuring they are updated in case of an emergency, enhancing overall safety.

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➢ *Panic Buttons & SMS Tab*

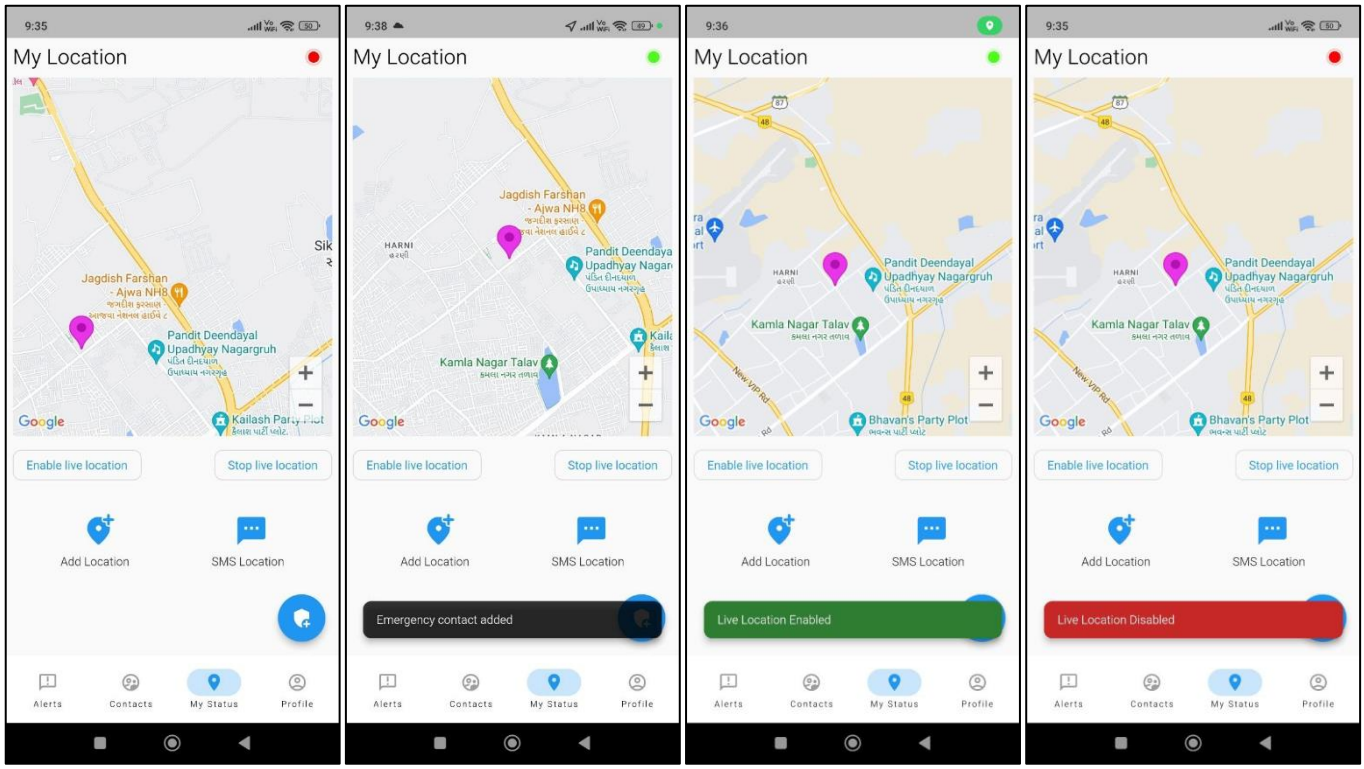

Fig 5: Panic Buttons & SMS Tab

- Description: Provides a quick way for users to activate emergency panic buttons and send SMS alerts to their emergency contacts. The SMS feature allows users to send instant messages in emergency situations.

➢ *Emergency Contact List Tab*

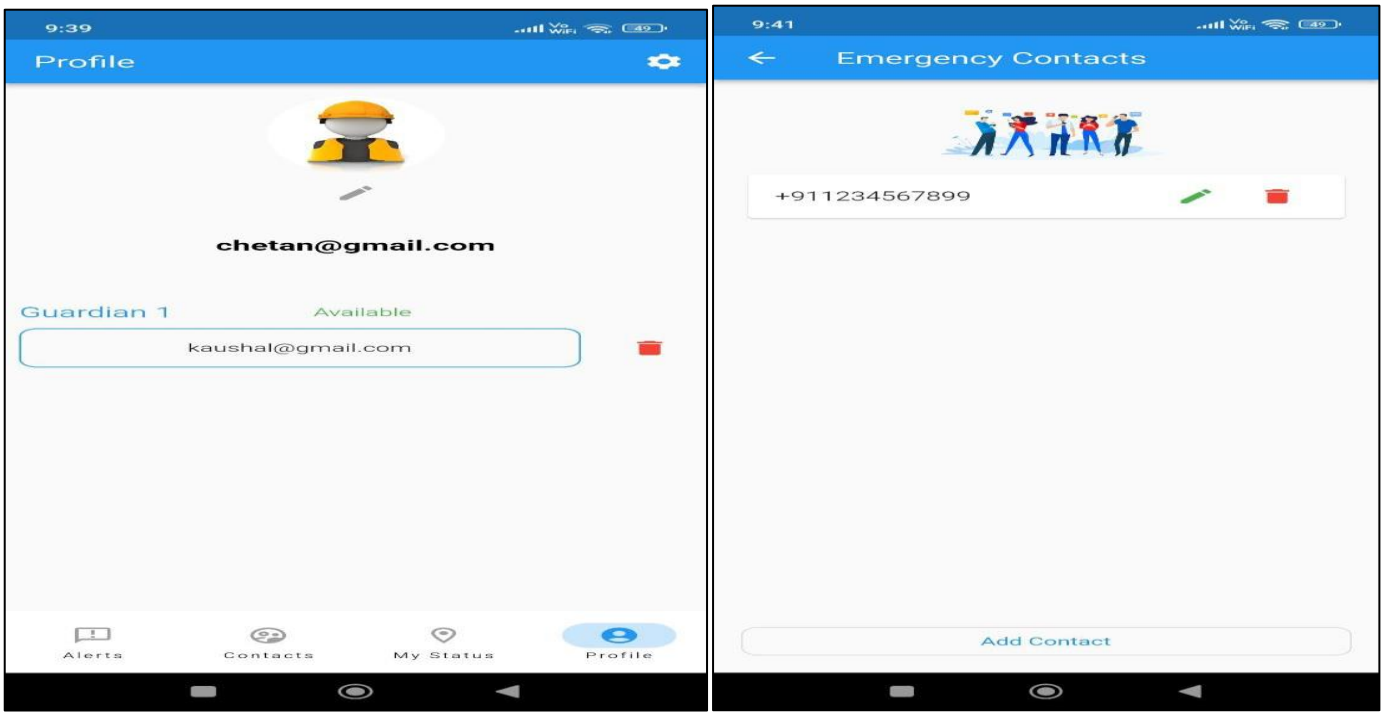

Fig 6: Emergency Contact List Tab

- Description: A dedicated section where users can manage and update their emergency contacts. This ensures that users can quickly reach out to their trusted contacts during emergencies.

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B. Police Platform App (SafeGuard) Interface Design:

➢ *Splash Screen*

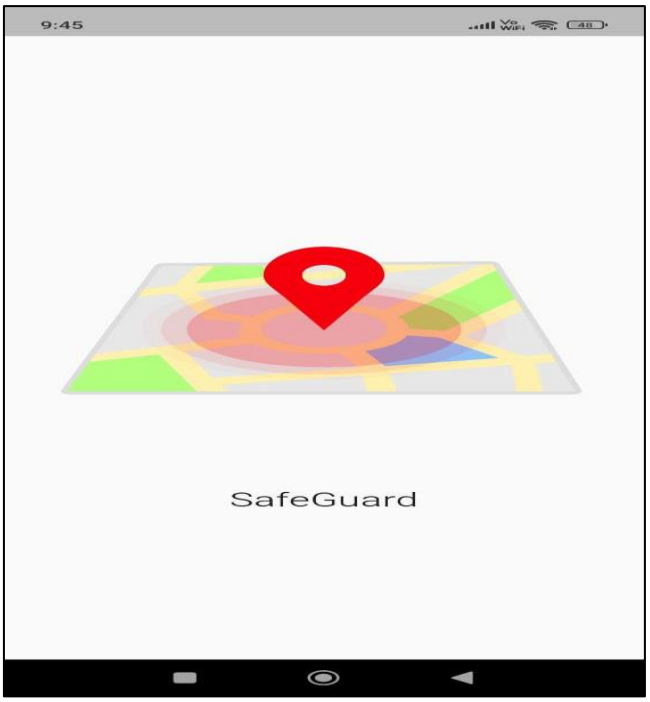

Fig 7: Police Platform Splash Screen

- Description: Displays the app logo and transitions into the combined registration/login page for police officers and other users.

➢ *Registration and Login Screens*

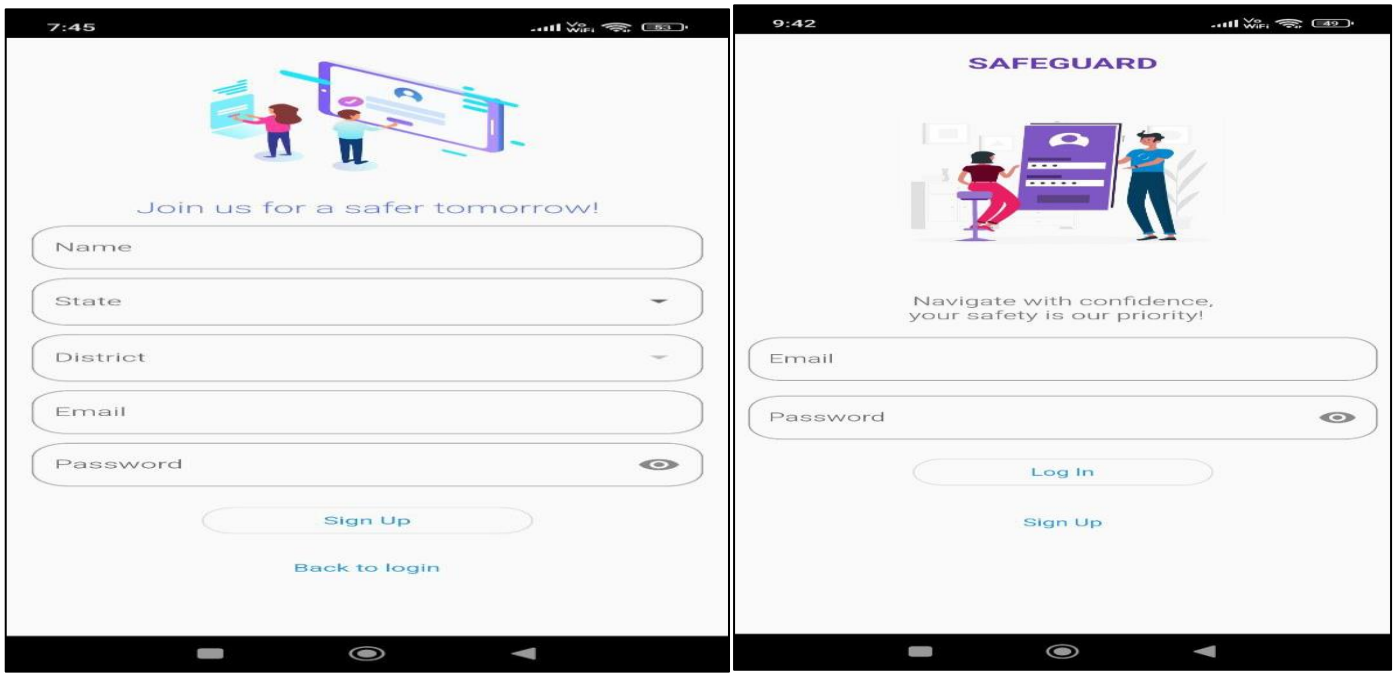

Fig 8: Police Registration and Login Sections

- Description: Similar to the user app, police officers can register or log in securely via Firebase, using phone number or email authentication.

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➢ *Surveillance Map Tab*

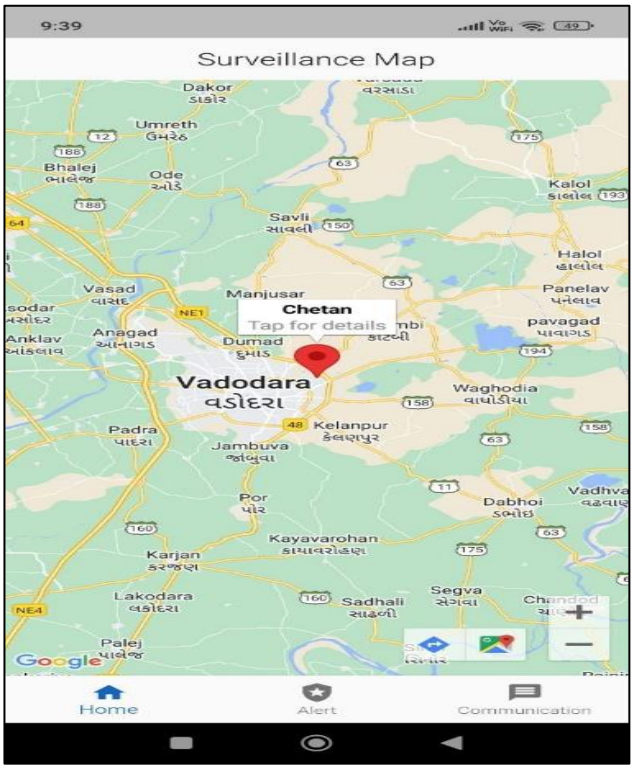

Fig 9: Surveillance Map Tab

- Description: This tab displays a real-time map of users who are in emergencies. Police can track the users' locations, enabling efficient and quick responses to emergencies.

➢ *Alert Tab*

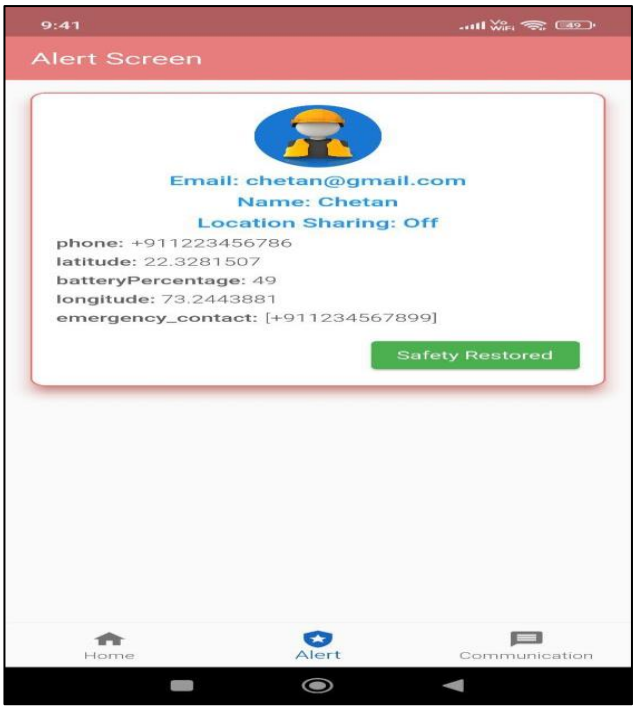

Fig 10: Alert Tab

- Description: Displays detailed information about users in emergency situations. This includes their name, coordinates, emergency contact numbers, and battery level. This ensures that police officers have all necessary details to respond effectively.

➢ *Announcements Tab*

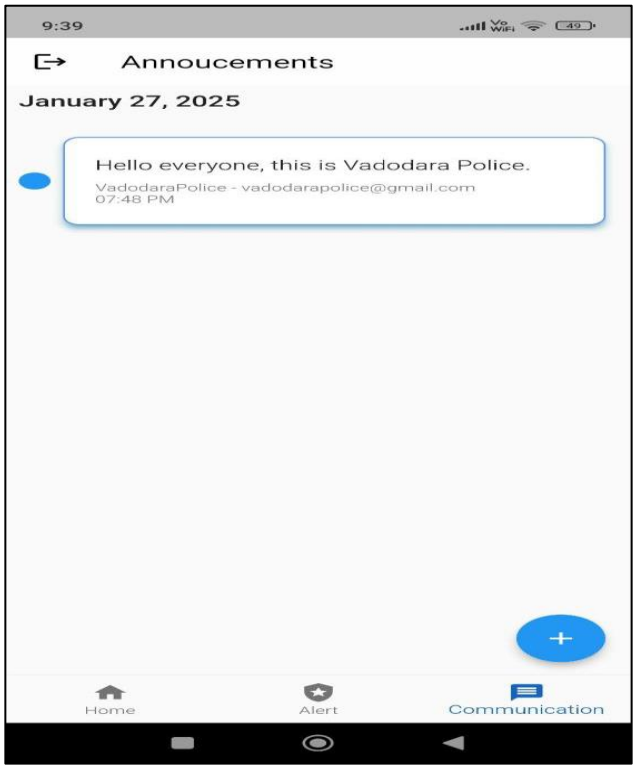

Fig 11: Announcements Tab

- Description: This tab allows the local police department to send crucial safety updates, alerts, and news to users within the jurisdiction, ensuring they stay informed during emergencies or significant events.

VI. CONCLUSION

The SafeGuard app stands as a comprehensive solution for personal safety, blending cutting-edge technology with essential security features to create an all-in-one platform. By seamlessly integrating live location tracking, real-time emergency alerts, secure communication, and local safety news, SafeGuard ensures users are empowered with the tools needed to protect themselves in critical situations. Built on Flutter, the app delivers a smooth, consistent experience across both iOS and Android, enhancing development efficiency with a unified codebase.

With Firebase at its core, SafeGuard provides robust backend services including secure authentication, real-time data storage, and push notifications, ensuring secure interactions between users, emergency contacts, and authorities. The integration of Google Maps enables precise location tracking, empowering users to share their location in real-time with trusted contacts or emergency services, ensuring rapid response during emergencies.

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For law enforcement, Safe Guard offers a unified platform, equipping police departments with real-time data on emergency incidents, tracking users' locations, and delivering timely alerts and updates within their jurisdiction. This efficient system supports a faster, more organized response to emergencies, benefiting both users and authorities.

Overall, Safe Guard is more than just an app—it's a reliable, privacy-focused, and highly effective security tool designed to provide peace of mind for users and facilitate timely intervention by law enforcement. With its integration of advanced features, secure systems, and user-centric design, SafeGuard is poised to be a vital component of modern personal safety, bridging the gap between individuals and emergency responders in critical times.

FUTURE WORK

Looking ahead, the SafeGuard app will focus on expanding its reach and functionality to further enhance user safety and experience. One key aspect of this development will be a comprehensive marketing campaign aimed at increasing awareness and educating users on the upcoming features before the app's release on the Google Play Store, Apple App Store, Amazon Appstore, and other relevant app stores. This will include highlighting the app's capabilities such as instant GPS tracking and emergency call features. Additionally, SafeGuard plans to integrate AI-powered predictive analytics, which will analyse user behavior, such as frequently visited locations and times of day, to proactively alert users of potential safety risks. For example, users could receive notifications if they are about to enter an area known for safety concerns based on historical data. Another major enhancement will be the integration with wearable devices like smartwatches and fitness bands. This feature will enable automatic detection of abnormal activity, such as falls or irregular heart rates, and trigger emergency alerts, making the app particularly useful for elderly or high-risk users. Moreover, SafeGuard aims to foster a stronger sense of community safety by introducing a "neighbourhood watch" feature, where users in close proximity can share real-time safety alerts and tips. This initiative will promote collaboration among users, especially in urban areas, making the app a more effective tool in addressing community concerns. To further address the issue of connectivity, SafeGuard will include an offline mode with preloaded emergency resources, such as first aid instructions, local emergency numbers, and offline maps, ensuring that users have access to vital information even in network-poor environments. Multi-language support will also be a key focus, expanding the app's accessibility to users across diverse linguistic regions. Finally, satellite-enabled alerts will be introduced, allowing users in remote or no-network areas to send distress signals that will notify emergency contacts and services, significantly improving response times in hard-to-reach locations. Together, these enhancements will further solidify SafeGuard as a reliable, all-encompassing safety tool for users worldwide.

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