



IN BRIEF

Five killed as jeep rolls down gorge in Himachal

SHIMLA
Five people were killed and an equal number injured as a jeep in which they were travelling skidded off the road and fell into a 250-metre-deep gorge in Mandi district on Thursday, police said. The dead, including three women, were residents of Ropa village in the district. IANS

Curbs imposed in Shopian district for one month

SRINAGAR
The Shopian district administration on Thursday ordered imposition of restrictions under Section 144 of the CrPC for a period of one month from May 3, an official spokesman said. According to the order, no assembly or congregation shall be allowed without prior permission of the district magistrate or duty magistrates. PTI

Two killed as car falls into deep gorge

PITHORAGARH (UTTARAKHAND)
Two persons were killed and as many injured Thursday when the car they were travelling in rolled down a gorge at a village here. The vehicle was returning from Jakh village when it fell into a 150 metre-deep gorge near Aincholi village, Pithoragarh Superintendent of Police R.C. Rajguru said. PTI

500 disabled people in Egypt to get Jaipur Foot

JAIPUR
A special camp for providing Jaipur Foot to 500 disabled people began in Egyptian city of Asyut on Thursday. The camp was organised by the Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti in association with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Egyptian government. PTI

Only seeking lifting of protection granted to former Kolkata CP: CBI

Solicitor General dismisses charge that Rajeev Kumar is being targeted

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday clarified that it is seeking lifting of protection granted to former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar by the Supreme Court on February 8 and not permission for his “custodial interrogation” in connection with its probe into the Saradha Ponzi scam.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi had in February 2019 granted a stay on any “coercive action” against Mr. Kumar provided he cooperate with the agency during a questioning session scheduled in Shillong.

Appearing for the CBI, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued that Mr. Kumar had met the agency’s queries on the alleged suppression of crucial evidence in the case like call data records with evasive or “arrogant” answers.



Rajeev Kumar

Mr. Mehta dismissed submissions made by senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for Mr. Kumar, that her client was being targeted as “a castle built in the air”. Mr. Kumar claimed that the allegations raised against him in connection with the multi-core Saradha chit fund scam was part of a “larger conspiracy” by two prominent Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, Mukul Roy and Kailash Vijayvargiya.

At the end of the hearing,

the Bench reserved the case for orders.

Complete evidence

Mr. Mehta said the CBI has been asking for the complete evidence since August 2014, after the court transferred the case from the West Bengal government-appointed SIT of which Mr. Kumar was the functional head. The CBI has been making consistent efforts for Mr. Kumar to cooperate in the probe for the past five years, and this has not been a recent development as is portrayed by his lawyers.

“The impression created that we have been hounding him has to be removed,” Mr. Mehta urged.

The CJ said the data was collected through multiple agencies, indicating that the delay from the SIT’s side may have been due to the time taken to gather the evidence.

The West Bengal govern-

ment has told the Supreme Court that the CBI plea against Mr. Kumar is merely a “political game”.

“The whole episode is a political game to keep the pot boiling and to paint people black,” senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for the West Bengal establishment, had submitted.

The CBI has alleged that both the “big Ponzi” Saradha and Rose Valley companies were “flourishing” when Mr. Kumar was the Commissioner of Police at Bidhan Nagar Police Commissionerate from 2012 to 2015.

While the investigation was being done by the SIT, “crucial original, primary and fundamental evidence” such as laptops, mobile phones, etc. were handed back to the main accused in the Saradha scam case by the I.O. of the West Bengal Police working under his direct supervision, the CBI alleged.

BJP MLA flayed for cow analogy on Muslims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Weeks after Union Minister Maneka Gandhi courted controversy by saying she might not be inclined to work for Muslims who do not vote for her, a Bharatiya Janata Party MLA in Assam has suggested that the government should not take care of Muslims for a similar reason.

Prasanta Phukan, who represents the Dibrugarh Assembly constituency, virtually equated Muslims with cows that do not yield milk.

“It is common knowledge that 90% Muslims did not vote for us in the Lok Sabha election. There is no point in providing fodder to a cow that does not produce milk,” he said earlier this week.

His remark did not go down well with leaders of the minority community.

Anwar Hussain Laskar, All India United Democratic Front MLA from Hailakandi, said only a deranged person could make such a statement.

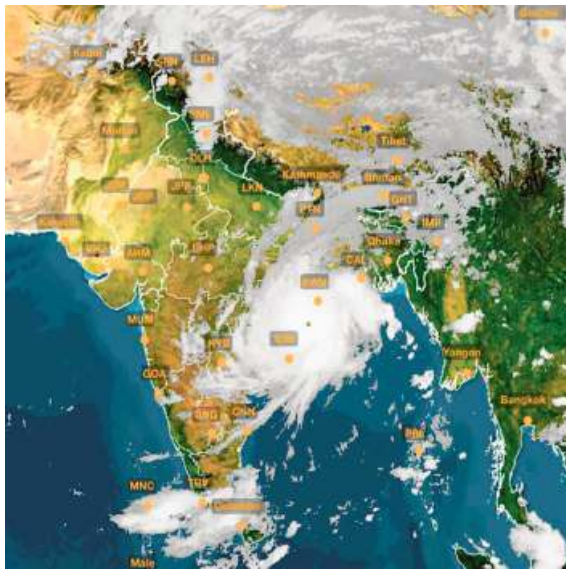
Nekibur Zaman, an advocate of the Gauhati High Court, said the BJP should suspend Mr. Phukan for the “shameless and condemnable” observation about Muslims. “His party should censure him for the cow analogy that is unbecoming of an elected representative,” he said.

Mr. Phukan, however, stood his ground. “I used a popular Assamese proverb on cows to drive home a point. I did not say anything wrong,” he said but insisted his statement was misinterpreted.

He pointed out that earmarking ₹100 crore in the budget did not yield any support from the Muslims for the BJP-led government in Assam.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY












TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy/very heavy rain likely at a few/isolated places over coastal/adjoining districts of interior Odisha, West Bengal, north coastal Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Meghalaya, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala.....	—	37.0...	27.2	Kozhikode	5.4...	35.0...	26.6
Ahmedabad	—	41.6...	25.8	Kurnool	—	39.6...	27.4
Aizawl	—	37.1...	16.6	Lucknow	—	43.0...	28.7
Allahabad	—	44.1...	29.2	Madurai	—	41.2...	28.0
Bengaluru	—	33.4...	22.0	Mangaluru	—	36.2...	24.9
Bhopal	—	41.6...	27.4	Mumbai	—	33.1...	24.9
Bhubaneswar	—	34.7...	27.4	Mysuru	—	34.1...	21.4
Chandigarh	—	36.9...	24.0	New Delhi	—	41.0...	25.8
Chennai	—	41.5...	29.4	Patna	—	39.4...	27.0
Coimbatore	—	35.4...	25.7	Port Blair	—	34.4...	25.3
Dehradun	5.5	35.2...	20.6	Puducherry	22.6	38.4...	23.2
Gangtok	1.5	23.1...	15.3	Pune	—	35.8...	21.6
Goa	—	33.8...	25.5	Raipur	—	41.0...	29.5
Guwahati	21.6	31.5...	21.6	Ranchi	—	35.8...	23.5
Hubballi	—	35.0...	21.0	Shillong	—	26.3...	15.4
Hyderabad	0.3	41.6...	27.9	Shimla	11.8	22.7...	13.6
Imphal	11.2	31.4...	19.1	Srinagar	—	20.3...	9.4
Jaipur	—	40.0...	27.3	Trivandrum	—	34.6...	26.6
Kochi	20.8	33.0...	24.4	Tiruchi	—	40.8...	29.2
Kohima	2.6	27.7...	14.2	Vijayawada	—	38.0...	27.6
Kolkata	—	34.6...	28.5	Visakhapatnam	0.1	33.3...	28.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing						Yesterday
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.....	.95	22	236	.....
Bengaluru	.....	.8	31	66	.....
Chennai	.....	.7	12	53	77	
Delhi	27	.....	63	200	348	
Hyderabad	13	38	13	88	133	
Kolkata	.2	29	25	19	28	
Lucknow	12	29	51	245	.....
Mumbai	29	16	87	38	111	
Pune	29	14	32	105	91	
Visakhapatnam	.8	39	29	22	50	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Loni Dehat, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 356 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution.

In contrast, Asansol, West Bengal recorded a healthy AQI score of 39

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease