

IAF chief at Pearl Harbor base when gunman opened fired on Dec 4, unhurt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 6

CHIEF OF the Indian Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria, was at the same airbase in Hawaii, US, where a gunman opened fire on December 4 but he was not in the vicinity of the attack site and was safe, officials said on Friday. ACM Bhadauria was partici-

pating in the Pacific Air Chiefs' Symposium, 2019 (PACS 2019) at the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii. The symposium brings together Air Force chiefs from across the Indo-Pacific region.

The Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam confirmed the shooting and casualties on Twitter. It said, "Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam security forces responded to a reported shooting at a dry dock

at @PHNSYIME. Initial reports indicate the shooter & two shipyard civilian employees are deceased, & one shipyard civilian is in stable condition at a local hospital."

It also identified the shooter in another tweet, saying: "The shooter has been identified as a male U.S. Navy Sailor assigned to the USS Columbia (SSN 771). The incident took place at approximately 2:30 p.m. in the vicinity of the shipyard's Dry Docks 2 and 3. The base is no longer in lockdown."

The base was put under a lockdown immediately after the incident, which was lifted after about two hours.

Abe to visit on Dec 15, bilateral likely in Assam

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 6

JAPAN'S PRIME Minister Shinzo Abe will be in India from December 15-17, the government said on Friday.

The Indian Express has learnt that he is likely to go to Assam as the bilateral meeting will take place in Guwahati. The two leaders are likely to go to Kaziranga National Park and also visit Imphal.

The focus of the visit will be projects in the Northeast, in tune with India's Act East policy.

Delhi and Tokyo have made "significant progress" in the negotiations of Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) since the announcement to commence the negotiations in October 2018.

Last year, the two sides agreed to begin formal negotiations over the ACSA, which would allow the Indian military and the Japan Self Defense Force (JSDF) to use each other's bases for logistical support.

The ACSA would permit the Indian Navy access to a Japanese base in Djibouti, while the Japan



Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe may head to Guwahati for the bilateral meet with PM Narendra Modi.

Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) would be permitted to use India's military installations on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands located in the Indian Ocean, which lie near the Malacca Straits, next to other naval facilities.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Taro Kono on November 30 for the first India-Japan 2+2 foreign and defence ministerial meeting. The meeting laid the ground-

work for the summit meeting between Abe and Modi.

During the meeting between the visiting Japanese ministers and the Prime Minister on November 30, Modi had said that both he and Abe attach great importance to strengthening the bilateral partnership between the two countries.

He had conveyed that he looked forward to welcoming Abe to India for the India-Japan Annual Summit next month, the statement said.

"Prime Minister added that India's relationship with Japan was a key component of our vision for Indo-Pacific for peace, stability and prosperity of the region, as well as a cornerstone of India's Act East Policy," the statement had said.

It had added that the Prime Minister stressed the importance of all-round development in India-Japan relations for the benefit of the two peoples, as well as the region and the world. The PM mentioned that regular high-level exchanges between the two countries are testimony to the depth and strength of the relationship.

CORRUPTION CASE

CBI carries out search at premises of HC judge

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 6

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday searched the residence of Justice Sri Narayan Shukla, a judge of the Allahabad High Court, in a case of alleged corruption.

The CBI has accused Justice Shukla of accepting bribes to give a favourable order to a private medical college barred by the government from taking admissions.

While Justice Shukla has been arraigned as an accused along with six others in an FIR registered on December 4, the matter is related to a 2017 case where the agency had arrested retired High Court judge I M Qudus.

Following the 2017 case, then CJI Dipak Misra had asked Justice Shukla to resign or seek voluntary retirement, but the latter refused.

According to the CBI, searches were conducted at the "residential premises of the accused at Lucknow, Delhi and Meerut which led to the recovery of certain incriminating documents including investments and financial transactions etc".

Other accused charged with corruption and criminal conspiracy in the December 4 FIR include Qudusi, his associate Bhawana Pandey, Lucknow-based medical college Prasad Education Trust (PET), its owners B P Yadav and Prasad Yadav and one Sudhir Giri.

According to the CBI FIR, the PET-run Prasad Institute of Medical Sciences was among 46 colleges barred by the government from admitting students for two years due to lack of facilities in 2017. The order was challenged in the Supreme Court. The court directed the government on August

1, 2017, to consider the material on record afresh, the FIR said. In compliance with the order, the government barred the college from taking admissions for two sessions — 2017-18 and 2018-19. It also authorised the MCI to encash the college's bank guarantee of Rs 2 crore.

The promoters again approached the apex court with a petition. At the same time, they got in touch with Justice Qudus and Pandey, who promised to get the matter settled, the FIR said.

According to the FIR, a conspiracy was hatched in New Delhi between B P Yadav, Qudus, Pandey and Giri (who owns Venkatesh-wara Medical College in Meerut) "in order to obtain a favourable order from Justice Shri Narayan Shukla of High Court of Allahabad at Lucknow Bench by corrupt and illegal means. In furtherance of the said conspiracy, Qudus engaged Shukla for managing the matter."

Accordingly, the FIR alleged, the promoters withdrew the apex court petition and filed a petition in the Allahabad High Court on August 25. In an interim relief, the High Court ordered that the "petitioner college shall not be delisted... till the next date of listing i.e. August 31, 2017", the FIR stated. It also stayed encashment of the bank guarantee of Rs 2 crore by the MCI till the next date of hearing. The High Court, the CBI said, also "clarified that on the basis of the order, the petitioners shall have no right to claim any admission of the students".

According to the CBI, on August 25, Qudus and B P Yadav met Justice Shukla at his residence in Lucknow and "delivered the illegal gratification".

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NALSA chairperson Justice Ramana outlines plans with 'Vision 2020' document

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 6

THE NATIONAL Legal Services Authority (NALSA's) new executive chairperson Justice N V Ramana on Friday released a 'Vision 2020' document with its theme, "Mission Access Justice to All".

Justice Ramana, who is also the second senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, was nominated to the post of NALSA executive chairperson on November 27. The plans he has lined out include a novel 'Legal Aid Defence Counsel System' which will engage lawyers on full-time basis; an online portal for centralising information about prisoners; providing legal assistance to the needy at pre-arrest, arrest and remand stages; and convening of legal services clinic in jails.

For the future, there was a need to establish a "target-oriented mechanism", wherein resources can be invested after identifying specific problem areas, says the document.

The idea of the 'Legal Aid Defence Counsel System' was adopted at the NALSA All India Meet in Nagpur, it says.

Explaining the need for it, Justice Ramana said one of the biggest problems hindering the success of legal aid was the lack of continuity, focus and accountability. The new system is aimed at increasing the same, by assigning the cases from the beginning to advocates whose sole attention will be on legal aid cases, and whose performance will therefore be more effectively reviewed. The project will be implemented in sixteen districts across the country on a pilot basis for two years. The online portal project is intended at creating a unified platform to integrate data about legal services provided to prisoners at all levels.

There are also plans for establishing a specialised wing to provide fast action to persons affected by cyber offences as well as a "victim assistance mechanism" to protect the victim in cases where the police are "negligent, non-responsive and partisan" in taking action on the grievances of a complainant.

Justice Ramana said that besides these areas, it is also imperative to constantly review and evaluate the quality of lawyers and the paralegal volunteers appointed by NALSA.

TAJ TRAPEZIUM ZONE SC allows UP to issue clearances for basic facilities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 6

THE SUPREME Court on Friday lifted the "status quo" ordered by it last year in the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) and said that "there shall be no impediment for the authorities to consider pending environmental clearances which are necessary to secure essential amenities within the Zone".

A bench of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant concluded that the "the interim order dated 22nd March, 2018, directing maintenance of status quo, was passed to ensure timely submission of the 'Vision Plan' by the State of UP" and the same had already been complied with. The directions came on an application by the government seeking clarification on the March 22 order. In its application, the state said that the first draft of the Vision Plan had already been filed.

The plea urged the court to permit the state and other statutory authorities to grant environmental clearances necessary for essential public facilities.

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