



NEARBY



Brutally thrashed, says actor Deepak Kabir

LUCKNOW
Theatre actor and cultural activist Deepak Kabir on Thursday alleged that the police not only brutally thrashed and abused him in custody but also labelled him an “urban Naxal”. Mr. Kabir, 44, was released from jail after a court granted him bail in a case of violence during a protest against Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Lucknow on December 19.

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Teenager in hit-and-run to be tried as ‘child’: SC

NEW DELHI
A loophole in juvenile law will see a teenager who allegedly drove his father’s luxury car over a 32-year-old man in Delhi being tried as a child rather than an adult who committed a heinous crime. A Supreme Court Bench observed that an offence which does not provide a minimum sentence of seven years cannot be treated as a heinous offence.

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Foreign envoys in J&K on a fact-finding visit

They met politicians, editors and elected grassroots leaders

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

A 15-member foreign envoys’ delegation arrived in Srinagar on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir and met over 100 people, including senior Valley-based politicians, top newspaper editors and grassroots representatives.

They were seeking feedback on the ground situation post the revocation of the State’s special status, Pakistan’s attempts at interference and the immediate demands of the people.

Unlike the controversial tour of the European Union (EU) parliamentarians in October last year, these envoys, including U.S. Ambassador to India Kenneth I. Juster and the Norwegian Ambassador, drove past busy streets from the airport to reach Lalit Grand Palace Hotel. The venue is close to the sub-jail where National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah has been detained since August 5. The envoys did not meet him.

No shutdown was observed nor was any violence reported, unlike during the EU parliamentarians’ visit.

During their interactions with politicians, local editors and elected grassroots leaders, the envoys posed pointed questions on the re-



Ground study: Foreign envoys arriving at the Srinagar airport on Thursday on a two-day visit. • ANI

SC verdict on curbs today

The Supreme Court will on Friday pronounce its verdict on the legality of the restrictions on the fundamental freedom of movement and the shutdown of communications in Jammu and Kashmir since August 5, following the withdrawal of Article 370. ▶ PAGE 12

vocation of Article 370 and wanted to know if Pakistan was making attempts to interfere, delegates at the meetings told *The Hindu*.

There was a common demand for restoration of Internet services, they added.

The foreign envoys, mainly from South American,

Why ban us, asks Congress

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Centre of adopting double standards by taking Ambassadors on a “guided political tour” of Jammu and Kashmir, while barring Indian politicians from the Union Territory. He sought “unfettered access” for all politicians. ▶ PAGE 12

African and Asian nations, held a closed-door interaction with a group of prominent politicians led by Altaf Bukhari, fast emerging as the face of a non-NC, non-Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) third front.

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JNU students beaten up during march

Ministry rules out V-C’s removal after talks with delegation of students, teachers

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

Several students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) were beaten up on Thursday by Delhi police personnel as they tried to march towards Rashtrapati Bhavan after “unsatisfactory” talks with officials of the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry. At least four students received injuries when police used “mild force” to disperse the march. Around 11 students were also detained but later released.

Scores of people, since late afternoon, had assembled outside the HRD Ministry as a protest march starting from Mandi House culminated there. HRD Secretary Amit Khare met a delegation of nine representatives from JNU Students’ Union and JNU



Students being detained during a protest march towards Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Teachers’ Association demanding the removal of Vice Chancellor M. Jagadeesh Kumar. The Ministry ruled out Mr. Kumar’s removal. “Removing the VC is not the solution. The basic issue on which the whole problem has arisen needs to be addressed first. Changing X, Y or Z is not

as important as resolving the issues that have come up,” said Mr. Khare.

Ministry officials, however, asserted that the “formula” decided during consultations with students and administration needs to be implemented. The university officials, including the Vice

Chancellor, have been called at the Ministry on Friday over students’ claims that the revised fees as decided during HRD intervention are not being implemented.

Towards evening, JNU Students’ Union president Aishe Ghosh addressed those gathered outside Shastri Bhawan and termed the MHRD meeting “unsatisfactory” and called for a march to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Students and protesters started moving but were stopped by the police. In the melee, several protesters were beaten up by the police and taken away in police vehicles. A male student suffered head injuries during baton charge.

(With inputs from Saubh Trivedi and agencies)

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T.N., Kerala hunt for suspected Islamic ultras

Duo killed an SSI in Kanniyakumari

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KANNIYAKUMARI

Preliminary investigations into the gunning down of special sub-inspector of police Wilson, 57, at Padanthaalumoodu checkpoint in Kanniyakumari district on Wednesday night, point to the involvement of suspected Islamic extremists.

With the help of CCTV images, the police identified the assailants as A. Abdul Shameem of Thiruvithaan-

code and M. Thoufique of Malik Dinar Nagar in Kottar, Kanniyakumari.

Police sources said Shameem was involved in the murder of Hindu Munnani activist Suresh Kumar in Chennai in June 2014. He was arrested with some others but released on bail in



M. Thoufique (left) and Abdul Shameem

December 2019. He went underground thereafter.

Tamil Nadu Director General of Police J.K. Tripathy and ADGP, Law and Order, K. Jayanth Murali, who arrived in Kerala on Thursday, had an hour-long meeting with Kerala police chief Loknath Behera and ADGP, Law and Order, Sheikh Darvesh Saheb.

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Centre withdraws CRPF cover for Stalin, OPS

‘State govt. can provide them security’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has withdrawn the security cover of DMK president M.K. Stalin and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, a senior government official said on Thursday.

Mr. Stalin had Z-category security cover and Mr. Panneerselvam had Y-category proximate security cover, provided by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The official said that the CRPF was tasked with providing proximate and mobile security cover to both the leaders only in Tamil Nadu, which now stood withdrawn. While Z-category is the second highest form of security cover, with 20-22

Stalin was given Z-category security cover and Panneerselvam Y-category

personnel involved, Y-category protection entails deployment of 11-12 personnel.

The official said that the State government could provide protection to the two leaders.

In July last year, around 1,300 security personnel were freed of VIP security duty after the MHA reviewed security cover of 350 individuals, including politicians.

Recently, the Centre withdrew the Special Protection Group cover of Congress leaders Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi and replaced it with Z-plus cover of CRPF.

SC rebuffs plea to implement CAA

Court must independently review the law for elements of unconstitutionality: CJI

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde said the country was already going through difficult times and an endeavour should be made to maintain peace.

The CJI made the oral comments while hearing a petition seeking an “aggressive” implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), which fast-tracks benefits of citizenship to illegal immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan belonging to six minority religions but denies the same treatment to Muslims.

“Country is going through difficult times. There has been some violence. Endeavour now should be for



peace. Such petitions don’t help,” Chief Justice Bobde told the lawyer for Mumbai-based Puneet Kaur Dhanda.

Ms. Dhanda’s petition wanted the court to declare the Act “constitutional”.

The CJI scoffed at the prayer, explaining to the lawyer that any law passed by the legislature was anyway attached with “a presumption of constitutionality”. It was now for the Supreme Court to independently re-

view the law for elements of unconstitutionality in it.

“How can we just declare it [CAA] constitutional? There is anyway a presumption of constitutionality. You have been a student of law, you would know...” Chief Justice Bobde said.

The court, he said, had listed over 60 petitions challenging the legality of the Act for hearing on January 22. They argued that the Act shredded the nation’s basic

and fundamental value of secularism by discriminating in the grant of citizenship on the basis of religion.

The CJI remained non-committal when the lawyer sought an urgent hearing of his petition favouring the CAA. Ms. Dhanda asked the court to direct the Election Commission to take “strict action” against political parties “spreading false rumours and violence in the country”. The petition also sought legal action against those protesting against the CAA.

Protesters have said the Act is discriminatory in granting citizenship and had ripped apart the fabric of secularism.

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Maharashtra may reopen Loya case, says Minister

Foul play was alleged in judge’s death

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said the State government is open to reinvestigating the death of special CBI judge B.H. Loya if fresh evidence warrants it.

“Our government is open to reinvestigating the Loya death case. Some people are meeting me today to demand that the case be reopened. I will hear them out and if necessary, the case will be reinvestigated,” said Mr. Deshmukh. Asked whom he was meeting, the Minister said he could not divulge the names.

Loya, who was hearing

the high-profile Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case of Gujarat involving current Union Home Minister Amit Shah, died of cardiac arrest in Nagpur on December 1, 2014, when he had gone to attend the wedding of a colleague’s daughter. His death turned controversial after news reports suggested foul play.

BJP MLA Ashish Shelar criticised Mr. Deshmukh for his statement. “If the Supreme Court has closed the case, then what is the reason for the Home Minister to make such statements? Is he acting as per law or are political intentions behind this?” he said.

U.P. govt. suspends Noida SSP over objectionable video

Vaibhav Krishna had alleged corruption in the State police force in a ‘secret’ report to CMO, DGP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Days after an objectionable video of Gautambuddha Nagar Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Vaibhav Krishna came to light, the IPS officer has been suspended by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Mr. Krishna had described the video as “morphed” and a move to “malign” his image. He filed an FIR and called it a move by his rivals to deflect attention from a “secret” report on rampant corruption in postings that he had submitted to the Chief Minister’s Office and the Director General of Police.

In a simultaneous action, five IPS officers named in the



Gautambuddha Nagar SSP Vaibhav Krishna (left) had described the video as ‘morphed’. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

report have been removed from field postings and an SIT probe has been ordered.

Official sources said the video was sent to the forensic lab in Gujarat and a preliminary report found it to be authentic. The inquiry report also found him guilty of violating the service rules as he leaked the secret report to the media. Mr. Krishna al-

so made news when he allegedly sent police officers to Meerut to detain a senior journalist to know the source of the video. A departmental inquiry has been ordered against him.

‘Police-scribe nexus’

The leaked report detailed an alleged nexus between police officers and journalists to influence transfer postings and cases. The report was published after four journalists were arrested by the Gautambuddha Nagar police for alleged publication of fake news about police officers.

Among the 14 IPS officers transferred by the Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday are Himanshu Kumar,

Ajaypal Sharma, Rajiv Narayan Mishra, Sudhir Kumar Singh and Ganesh Saha, whose names were mentioned in the report submitted by Mr. Krishna.

Fighting corruption

An official release said there was zero tolerance against corruption and a three-member Special Investigation Team has been constituted to investigate the matter and submit the report within 15 days.

The allegations of exchange of money for plum postings sullied the “clean” image projected by the Yogi Adityanath government and gave an opportunity to the Opposition to take on the government.

U.P. tops list in crimes against women

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The National Crime Records Bureau published the annual Crime in India Report 2018 on Wednesday. It was published with provisional data, as five States – West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim – did not send clarifications sought by the NCRB.

According to the report, 3,78,277 cases of crime against women were reported, up from 3,59,849 in 2017. Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 59,445 cases, followed by Maharashtra (35,497) and West Bengal (30,394).

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