

Delhi HC upholds conviction of 7 Uttarakhanda Cops in 2009 Dehradun fake encounter case

NEW DELHI, FEB 6 /- The Delhi High Court on Tuesday upheld a trial court's order convicting and awarding life terms to seven policemen for killing a 22-year-old MBA student in a staged shoot-out in Dehradun in 2009.

The High Court ruled that a "fake encounter has no place in legal system". "A fake encounter is a form of extra judicial killing which has no place in a legal system governed by the rule of law. It is a manifestation of the impunity with which armed forces, including the police, are prone to act in utter dis-

regard of the rule of law," a bench of Justices S Muralidhar and I S Mehta said. "It is also symbolic of the cynicism with which the police themselves view the efficacy of the criminal justice system. The police, in this perception, are not just the accusers, but the prosecutor, the judge and the executioner." The court described the matter as a "tragic case of the killing of a 20-year-old by the Uttarakhand Police in a fake encounter."

"The lawlessness of a police force, which is what a fake encounter represents, is not a new phenomenon," the

court said convicting seven Uttarakhand policemen in the 2009 killing of the MBA student in Dehradun. It held them guilty of involvement in the conspiracy to kidnap and kill Ghaziabad resident Ranbir Singh, who went to Dehradun to take up a job on July 3, 2009. A trial court in June 2014 awarded life imprisonment to 17 policemen convicted of killing Singh. They were arrested for gunning down the young man on charges that he was "attempting to commit crime". The case was transferred to Delhi by the Supreme Court on the plea of Ranbir Singh's father

Ravindra Singh. "The prosecution has proved beyond reasonable doubt their (seven policemen) guilt for the substantial offence of abduction of and illegal detention of the deceased... and his murder" under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the High Court said. The seven policemen are then Inspector Santosh Jaishwal and sub-inspectors Gouri Dutt Bhatt, Rajesh Bisht, Neeraj Kumar, Nitin Chauhan, Chandra Mohan and Ajeet Singh. The court pointed out that the convictions have failed to prove their defence that they fired in self-

defence consequent upon the deceased and his two associates firing at them. "The bullet marks on the teak table in the forest do not conclusively prove that the deceased fired upon the policemen. Not even one of the accused policemen has suffered any injury," the court said. "All the bullet entry wounds on the body of the deceased have been accounted for by the medical and ballistic evidence," the court said pointing out that the wounds were caused by the weapons wielded by the seven policemen convicted in the case.

Cong Sewa Dal's member killed

NEW DELHI, FEB 6 /- Delhi Congress Sewa Dal organiser Vinod Mehra was shot dead in a suspected road rage incident on Bhalaswally near GT Karnal Road today, police said.

Vinod Mehra, 43, was returning to his home at Goeta Colony after attending a marriage ceremony at a banquet hall on GT Karnal Road when the incident took place. A call about gunshot injury sustained by a person, later identified as Mehra, was received by the police control room at 2.53 pm, said a senior police officer. "The victim, on his way back from the marriage function, got involved in a brawl with occupants of another vehicle who were driving rashly. It appears to be a case of road rage but investigation is covering all possible angles," he said.

Ajay Maken, the Delhi Congress chief, expressed grief over Mehra's demise and demanded that the police arrest the culprits at the earliest. Mehra was accompanied by his minor nephew at the time of the incident. He told the police that Mehra's car was scraped by another vehicle and he was asked its occupants to drive carefully. The occupants of the other vehicle took offence and a brawl ensued in which Mehra was shot in the chest, said the officer. Mehra's nephew with the help of an acquaintance, who was returning from the same marriage function, took him to Paramanand hospital where he was declared brought dead. "A case has been registered and efforts are being made to nab the culprits. Identification of the suspects is being attempted through screening of the CCTV footage," added the officer.

TN school sweeper who helped avert tragedy honored

NAGAPATTINAM, FEB 6 /- Nagapattinam district administration today honoured the sweeper of a primary school in the district, who helped avert a major tragedy by identifying contamination of herbicide in drinking water. On January 25, unidentified miscreants had mixed herbicides and rat poison in the overhead water tank of government primary school at North Maruthur village near Vedaranyam.

The sweeper Nagammal had noticed that the water had turned pale white with an unpleasant odour and immediately alerted the headmaster Vadivel, who in turn, informed the Kariyapattinam police. The police rushed to the spot and found empty containers of chloroacetyl herbicide and rat poison near the water tank.

A holiday was declared to the school and the children were sent back home that day. Timely identification by Nagammal had helped avert a major tragedy. The school's parents-teachers association had honoured her during the Republic Day celebrations.

No Aadhaar: Nepali students could miss UP madrasa board exams

LUCKNOW, FEB 6 /- Nearly 1,000 Nepali students enrolled in madrasas in the state might not be able to take the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board (UPMEB) exams due to lack of Aadhaar cards, which is mandatory for the test, a madrasa teachers' body said today. The situation also prompted the Madrasa Arbia

Travel ban on CPM leader's son rocks Kerala Assembly

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 6 /- Members of the Opposition for the first time today lodged horns over a travel ban imposed on party secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son by a Dubai court in a cheating case.

While the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) maintained that the ban on Binoy Kodiyeri, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) wanted it to be discussed in the House and staged a walkout after being denied permission by the Speaker. The zero hour witnessed a war of words between the treasury and opposition benches. Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the travel ban and the cheating case were part of a business dispute between two individuals and the CPM, Kodiyeri and Binoy had already made their stand clear on it.

"The chief minister said though there had been instances of relatives of political leaders being involved in cases, Parliamentary and Assembly space was never used to discuss the matters. "The state government or the Assembly has nothing to do with the issue. The Opposition has a hidden agenda in raising the matter in the House. It is part of an attempt to

insult the CPM and Kodiyeri," he said. Vijayan also slammed the Opposition for lodging the recently convened Loka Sabha, an initiative of the government to connect Malayalis across the world with their home state, to the allegations.

Seeking a notice for an adjournment motion over the issue, Anil Akkara of Congress said the cheating case and the travel ban were being used to target the Malayali community across the world. There was an attempt to cheat people in the name of Loka Sabha, the MLA alleged. Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said the complainant in the case had approached CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury in New Delhi. The issue was only a "tip of the iceberg," he alleged.

Speaker P Sreedharakrishnan, who repeatedly rejected the opposition to step back from raising the issue in the Assembly, disallowed an adjournment motion, following which the rival parties walked out of the House. The Dubai court imposed the ban on Binoy on February 1 based on a complaint by Dubai-based JAAS Tourism which alleged that he had cheated it of Rs 13 crore. Binoy who is now in Dubai, has been asked to deposit his passport with the court.

About 6,500 DDA flats surrendered by allottees: Minister

NEW DELHI, FEB 6 /- About 6,500 flats allotted last year under the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) housing scheme have been surrendered by the allottees, the Lok Sabha was informed today.

The DDA has offered about 4,500 of these flats for allotment to organisations such as Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Border Security Force (BSF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for accommodation of their personnel deployed in various parts of Delhi, the minister said, adding

the response of these organisations was awaited. The flats will be allotted to these organisations on "no profit, no loss" basis. To a query, the minister said the DDA has intimated that there was no scope for further reduction in rates of these flats as they were offered on "no profit, no loss basis".

The DDA has also decided to increase the size of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Lower Income Group (LIG, 1BHK) flats for future construction to 40 sqm (including circulation) and 50 sqm respectively.

On whether the once sought after DDA flats have, of late, been losing out to private housing projects, Puri replied, "The DDA has intimated that no such report has been received by it." Over 46,000 applicants had applied for 12,617 flats across four income categories located in Rohini, Dwarka, Naraina, Vasant Kunj, Jasola, Pitampura, Paschim Vihar and Sirsapur. Draw was held in November

for the flats, costing from close to 7 lakh to over Rs 1.26 crore. Of the total number of flats offered, around 10,000 unoccupied ones were from the 2014 housing scheme. The DDA had offered 25,040 flats across categories, with prices ranging between Rs 7 lakh and Rs 1.2 crore.

State Notes

Dalit man threatens to convert to Islam

MUZAFFARPUR, FEB 6 /- A Dalit man staged a sit-in at the district magistrate's office here and threatened to convert to Islam if authorities failed to free his land from unauthorised possession, police said today. Suresh Kumar, a resident of Kakka village, on Monday alleged that his land had been illegally occupied by some influential people, they said. He also handed over to officials a memorandum addressed to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in which he threatened to convert to Islam if authorities failed to free his land, police said. Kumar had also alleged that the local police did not take any step in the matter despite being requested repeatedly. PTI

Woman, daughter found burnt inside their house

AMRITSAR, FEB 6 /- A middle aged woman and her 25-year-old daughter were today found dead under mysterious circumstances in their house, with the police suspecting that they might have been killed by unknown persons. The bodies of the 45-year-old woman and her daughter were found burnt inside their separate rooms, they said, adding the former was found naked. According to the neighbours of the victims, they saw flames coming out of their house early morning today after which they informed the police, they said. A case of murder has been registered against unknown persons, the police added.

J&K govt abolishes 2 toll posts, toll-tax on non commercial LMVs

JAMMU, FEB 6 /- The Jammu and Kashmir government today said two major toll posts have been abolished, while non-commercial Light Motor Vehicles (LMVs) entering and leaving the state have been exempted from payment of basic toll. As a follow up to the budget announcement, the government has notified that toll posts established in the district of Lower Mundia in district Anantnag and Borehallan Heerpur in district Shopian have been abolished. "In exercise of the powers conferred by the Jammu and Kashmir Levy of Tolls Act, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir hereby directs that the Toll Posts established in the district of Lower Mundia in district Anantnag and Borehallan Heerpur in district Shopian under the provisions of the said Act, shall cease to operate from February

Siddaramaiah govt adopting Kerala, Bengal models to target workers: Karnataka BJP

BENGALURU, FEB 6 /- The Karnataka BJP alleged that the Siddaramaiah government in the state was adopting the West Bengal and Kerala models for targeting its workers and "committing political murders".

The Karnataka BJP Digital Communications Team made the accusation in a statement on Monday on social media site Facebook. "Never in Karnataka history had people witnessed political murders in large numbers, Karnataka, under Siddaramaiah, is following West Bengal and Kerala models for committing political murders," it said. The team also alleged that never in the state's history had a state minister (K J George) been charged as the first accused in a case related to the death of a senior police official. The CBI had in October last year named George as an accused in an FIR filed in connection with the alleged suicide of deputy superintendent of police (DSP) M K Ganapathy.

George was an accused in a team also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi -

during his February 4 public rally here - had rightly pointed out the "ease of doing murder" in Karnataka. The team also hit out at Siddaramaiah for claiming that Karnataka's crime rate was lower than that of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. It is wrong to compare a progressive state like Karnataka to Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, which are facing different problems due to high density of population. "This is an insult to Kannidigas", it said. Countering the chief minister's barb that Modi had no right to speak about corruption especially when the BJP's state chief B S Yeddyurappa had gone to jail on graft charges, it claimed there were over 67 cases pending against Siddaramaiah in the Lokayata and the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

In the flip side, all cases against Yeddyurappa have been quashed by the Karnataka High Court and no court in India has convicted the strong Limpat leader on any corruption charge, the BJP said. Hitting out at the

Prime Minister for his all-out attack on his government, Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah had on Monday accused him of telling a "tissue of lies" and said that he was "morally not fit" to be the prime minister. In a stinging attack on the Karnataka government on all fronts, Modi had in the rally accused it of setting new records in corruption and asserted that the countdown for its exit has begun. Reacting to the chief minister's comment that the Modi government has not waived farmer loans, the party's digital team alleged that as many as 3,500 farmers have committed suicides in the state under his government.

The team also said that the chief minister conveniently forgets to mention the waiving of loans to the tune of Rs 36,000 crore and Rs 30,000 crore by the Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra governments, respectively. On Siddaramaiah's claim that his government had built the world's largest solar plant in Karnataka, the BJP said only about 400 mw is operational out of the 2,000 mw.



Senior police officers carrying coffin of head constable Mushtaq Ahmad during wreath laying ceremony at District Police Lines Srinagar on Tuesday

More youths joined militancy in 2017, J&K CM tells Assembly

JAMMU, FEB 6 /- The number of local youths joining militancy in Kashmir Valley went up to 126 in 2017, a sharp increase from 89 in the previous year, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti informed the state Assembly here today.

Data for the number of youths recruited is available from 2010. "As many as 96 youths joined militancy in 2015, 88 in 2016 and 126 in 2017," Mehbooba said while replying to a written question by National Conference leader Ali Mohammed Sagar. News agency PTI had reported in December last year that 2017 had seen the highest number of local recruitments to various militant groups in seven years. This was denied by Director General of Police S Vaid. According to data placed before Parliament in March last year, there has been a steady increase in the number of youths taking up arms in the Valley from

2010 onwards - as compared to 2011, 2012 and 2013.

In 2010, 54 youths joined militancy. This dipped to 22 in 2011 and rose further to 21 in 2012 and 16 in 2013. In 2014, the number shot up to 53 and went up to 66 in 2015 before touching 88 in 2016, according to the data. The spurt in local joining militancy began after the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen terror group's poster boy Burhan Wani in an encounter in south Kashmir in July 8, 2016. Security officials feel there is a difference between present day militants and those of the early 1990s. The ideological conviction of the present lot is stronger than that of the terror groups during the early days, they said. There is concern that the Valley is witnessing a trend of pan-Islamisation, where young boys are opting for terrorism knowing full well that they are at the risk of being killed, the officials said.

Chhattisgarh: 3 CAF men hurt in IED blast; BSF jawan injured in gun battle with Naxalites

RAIPUR, FEB 6 /- Four security personnel were injured in two separate Naxal-related incidents in Chhattisgarh, police officials said today. A constable of the Border Security Force (BSF) was injured in a gun battle with Naxalites in Kanker district while three jawans of the Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) were hurt in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast triggered by the ultras in Bijapur district on Sunday night, they said. In Kanker, the skirmish took place this morning in a forest when a joint team of the BSF's 35th battalion and the district force was out on an anti-Maoist

operation, superintendent of police KL Dhruv told news agency PTI. When the security men were advancing through the forest between Gome and Gattakal villages, located around 220 kms away from Raipur, a group of ultras fired on them leading to the gun battle, he said. However, the ultras soon escaped from the spot, he said. "Constable Virappa KB, belonging to BSF's 35th battalion, sustained injuries in his leg below the knee in the encounter," the SP said. Reinforcement was rushed to the spot, he said, adding that the constable was airlifted and admitted to a hospital in Raipur. In another

incident in Bijapur, when the CAF men were returning after carrying out an anti-Maoist operation, the IED blast occurred last night in a forest near Ran Ibodli village, around 450 kms from here.

The ultras detonated the IED near a rivulet. Just a few metres away from the patroling team while it was passing through the forest, a local police official told PTI. Three constables, belonging to the CAF's 9th battalion, sustained superficial splinter injuries in the incident, the official said. They were admitted to a hospital in Bijapur, he said, adding that their condition was stable.



LIC Agents' Organisation of India (CITU) staging a dharna in front of the State Secretariat to press their various demands, in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.