

Bulandshahr: After One BJP MP Supports Accused, Another Blames Slain Policeman

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A Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Uttar Pradesh has said police inspector Subodh Kumar Singh may have become a target of mob violence in Bulandshahr because the team he was leading had not been able to stop cattle smuggling and slaughter. Meerut MP Rajendra Agrawal's comment comes only days after Bulandshahr MP Bhola Ram stood up for the prime accused in the policeman's killing. Bajrang Dal member Yogeshraj Singh, according to Ram, Yogeshraj was doing "noble and eye-opening work". Agrawal seems to be following a similar argument. He told the *Indian Express*, "Whatever has happened in

Bulandshahr on December 3 leading to the death of the Siana Station House Officer in mob lynching is highly deplorable. But the probe team should also include within its purview why no action was taken by the SHO in connection with the FIR lodged regarding cow smuggling at the Siana police station before the violence." "If cow slaughter has been declared by UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath as a serious crime, then we will have to look into the working of police stations, including Siana, over a broader time period. If we have to uproot the menace of cow slaughter, we will have to look at all aspects, down to the police station level," Agrawal said. The MP and former RSS *pracharak* told *Indian Express* that some policemen and officials

were standing in the way of Adityanath's "long-cherished dream" of ending cattle slaughter. I am not saying that all officers are corrupt but there are definitely some who have an agenda to denigrate the image of the BJP government for their vested political and monetary interests," Agrawal said. The MPs' comments do not stand out when compared to the BJP state government's official line. A day after the mob violence and the policeman's death, Adityanath ordered a probe into the alleged cow slaughter but did not say anything about the policeman's death. "Tough action needs to be taken against those who carried out cow slaughter," the official release on the chief minister's meeting with

top officials said. When Adityanath finally broke his silence on the inspector's killing two days later, he called it an "accident". The chief minister met Subodh Kumar Singh's family only three days after his death. The police is also following the state government's priorities. A d d i t i o n a l superintendent of police (Bulandshahr) Rayees Akhtar said the main concern was to find out who killed the cows. "After all, it was the killing of the cows that led to the protest, which resulted in inspector Subodh Kumar Singh's murder. Our belief is that once we solve that case, it will throw light on how the murder occurred. The cow-killers are our top priority. The murder and rioting case is on the backburner for now."

New J&K security law by Governor, for Governor

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J&K is set to get a new security force — this time, to protect the Governor and his family — with the move getting the green signal from the State Administrative Council, headed by Governor Satyapal Malik himself. J&K already has the Special Security Group (SSG) on the lines of the Special Protection Group (SPG) at the Centre to provide security to the chief minister, former chief ministers and their families. The Governor's security is currently being handled by J&K Police's security wing under an SP-rank officer. The new Jammu and Kashmir Governor's Special Security Force Bill, 2018 has "provisions related to the constitution and regulation of a separate security force in the State of Jammu and Kashmir for providing proximate security to the Governor, members of his immediate family and matters connected therewith". However, the move by the Governor to introduce another law under his tenure — now for his own security — has been questioned by political leaders, who described it as "ironic" and an attempt to create "a great wall of China around himself". They have also questioned the haste with which the Governor has been introducing new regulations. "It seems the Governor is making laws at such a speed that isn't possible even for an elected assembly. It is ironic," A R Rather, senior National Conference (NC) leader and former minister, told *The Indian Express*. "In the absence of an elected government, the Governor has the power to issue an ordinance but it has to be used judiciously. An ordinance is brought in an extraordinary situation when a delay could harm the interests of the state or cause a crisis. Here, the

Governor wants to change everything by introducing new laws almost daily. He is even amending the code of civil procedure," Rather said. "The Governor and his administration should focus on creating a conducive atmosphere for the conduct of elections so that a popular government takes over," he said. On Monday, the Supreme Court is set to hear a petition challenging the Governor's decision last month to dissolve the state assembly. "Here, we have had a former chief of Army staff and a former chief of R&AW, who were governors during the peak of militancy. They didn't feel so threatened that they would make a special force for their own protection. He (Governor Malik) was sent with a promise that since he is a politician, he would go to the people and interact with them. But he has erected a great wall of China around himself," Nayeem Akhtar, PDP leader and former minister, said. However, the Advisor to the Governor, K Vijay Kumar, told *The Indian Express* that the separate force is a "well thought-out decision". "I recommended it myself. There were ten men (guarding the Governor) from different districts and they were drawing salaries from different places. Some of them wouldn't get even salaries on time. There were all sorts of complications. It wasn't a cohesive force," Kumar said. "I was part of the SPG and have headed the SSG as well. So this concern (regarding the Governor's security) was first raised by me not in my present capacity but as DG CRPF long ago. Later, when I came for the Madhukar Gupta committee on border security, I enquired again. When I came back (as advisor) one of the first things I did was to put this in

motion," he said. Kumar said there is a reason why the Governor's security wasn't entrusted with the SSG. "We didn't want to mix it with the force protecting the CMs. There will be 160 people in this new force. We have deliberately kept only CMs and ex-CMs with the SSG... We could have expanded the SSG and tasked them with the Governor's security as well. But that wasn't proper, especially in J&K... the Governor and CM sharing the same security, moving up and down," he said. According to J&K Police sources, the special force will be headed by a DIG-level

officer, with personnel stationed in Jammu, Srinagar and Delhi. The personnel will accompany the Governor during his visits to other states as well, the sources said. In the existing Jammu and Kashmir Special Security Group Act, 2000, which relates to the constitution and regulation of a separate Special Security Group (SSG) in the state, "there is no provision for providing proximate security to the Governor and members of his immediate family", an official spokesman said. The SSG has a sanctioned strength of 473 personnel and is headed by an IG-level officer as director.

Kushwaha may quit NDA today

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RLSP president Upendra Kushwaha may quit the BJP-led NDA Monday, a day ahead of the start of the Winter Session and triggering a realignment of political equations in Bihar. The Rashtriya Lok Samta Party chief has been targeting the BJP and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, a key ally of the ruling party, for weeks. He has been upset with the BJP after it asserted that the RLSP would not be

given more than two seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, even as it went out of way to accommodate Kumar by agreeing that the saffron party and the JD(U) would fight equal number of seats. "Kushwaha is likely to announce his parting of ways with the BJP today. He will also quit as a Union minister," a senior RLSP leader said. The RLSP may join hands with the opposition, which includes Lalu Prasad's RJD and the Congress. Bihar sends 40 MPs to Lok Sabha.

HC seeks Centre's reply to PIL for entry of women into Nizamuddin shrine

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The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response of the Centre, the AAP government and police on a PIL seeking entry of women into the sanctum sanctorum of the Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah here. Apart from the Centre, the Delhi government and

police, a bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice V K Rao also issued notice to the trust managing the 'dargah' (shrine) and sought their stand on the plea by April 11, 2019. The court was hearing a plea by three women law students, who claimed that the dargah does not permit entry of women into the shrine.

BJP Ally Upendra Kushwaha Quits As Minister, Will Attend Opposition Meet

Agency
New Delhi, Dec. 10

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bihar ally Upendra Kushwaha quit as union minister and exited the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) today in a move that had been anticipated for months because of his growing resentment with another ally, Nitish Kumar, and his dominance in seat-share for the 2019 general election. Mr Kushwaha is also expected to join a big opposition meet to discuss a common strategy to fight the BJP next year. Mr Kushwaha, the chief of the RLSP (Rashtriya Lok Samata Party), had been flirting with the opposition for some time and met with Congress president Rahul Gandhi this morning before sending his resignation to PM Modi. "Nearly five years ago I joined the National Democratic Alliance,

under your leadership, with tremendous hope and expectations. During the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 you made several commitments to the people of Bihar and to the nation at large. It was in this context that I had extended my unconditional support to the BJP," the minister of state wrote in his resignation letter. Mr Kushwaha leaves the NDA minus his two state lawmakers or parliamentarian Arun Kumar, who had floated his own party earlier. But his exit triggers political realignment in Bihar, which has 40 seats, just before the national election. It is a huge boost for the opposition, especially for RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, who has taken charge of the opposition in Bihar since his father was jailed for corruption in Dec 2017. Sharad Yadav, Nitish Kumar's arch rival who quit his Janata Dal United last year, is believed to be ready to

merge his party with Mr Kushwaha's, so together they can have a better share of seats in an opposition alliance. Mr Kushwaha has made no bones about his disenchantment with the BJP. He had been feeling short-changed since the BJP struck a seven-seat deal with Nitish Kumar, the Bihar chief minister, last month. The message for Mr Kushwaha was that he would not be given more than two seats to contest in the Lok Sabha election. Bihar sends 40 MPs to the Lok Sabha. His sharpest public expression of revolt against the NDA came in a strongly-worded statement by the RLSP expressing concern over what it believed were objectionable and unnecessary decisions taken by the BJP and the central government. "We are not opposed to construction of mosques and temples. But this is not the function of political parties and their

meddling in such matters causes tensions in the society and diverts the attention of the public from real issues," said the party's resolution. On the growing chorus for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya by BJP's leaders and allies, RLSP's resolution said it "gives rise to the suspicion that the largest party in the coalition ruling the Centre, and some of its leaders, are deliberately trying to make the people forget about poverty, illiteracy and unemployment and get swayed by emotive issues. The party strongly condemns this attitude". The resolution also criticised the Nitish Kumar government in the strongest terms. For the latest News & Live Updates on Election Results from each assembly constituency in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter for updates.

BJP Ally Upendra Kushwaha Quits As Minister, Will Attend Opposition Meet

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi is staring at election losses in big heartland states, polls show, suggesting that farm distress and a lack of jobs for growing numbers of young people could prove stumbling blocks for his re-election bid in May. India counts votes on Tuesday from five states that chose new assemblies over the past month, but exit polls show Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could lose the three most important races, while it has little presence in two smaller states dominated by regional parties. The loss would be the biggest for Modi's Hindu nationalists since they swept to power in 2014 general elections, followed by wins over the past four years in 22 of India's 29 states, on promises of thousands of jobs and a doubling in farm income. Politicians view state polls, though they are usually decided by regional issues, as a pointer to the mood of the BJP's traditional voting base, ahead of a general election that must be held by May. "The results will set the tone for the 2019 election," said Sachin Pilot, a leader of the main opposition Congress party. Congress is tipped to win in Rajasthan, scrape through in Chhattisgarh and is locked in a photo finish with the BJP in

Madhya Pradesh. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are among India's biggest states. "The BJP has made a lot of tall claims about income, jobs etc," Pilot added. "They came out with 28 slogans, 'Swachh Bharat' ('Clean India'), 'Make in India' and such, but how many were implemented?" Modi remains the frontrunner for the general election, however, trailed in personal ratings by his main challenger, Congress president Rahul Gandhi. Modi promised to clean up India and turn it into a top tourist destination as well as lift the share of manufacturing in its economy to a quarter of gross domestic product, following the example of China. But it has grown only slightly, to 17 percent, with nearly all the ambitious clean-up programmes for cities and the river Ganges, as well as the Make-in-India campaign to build a domestic industrial base, largely unfulfilled. Anger over weak farm prices, slow growth in rural wages and small businesses hit by a new nationwide goods and service tax has also boiled over, provoking protests by tens of thousands of farmers in Delhi and Mumbai. Although the BJP might drop a few seats because of anti-incumbency sentiment, it was not losing everything, as some surveys forecast, said party spokesman G.V.L. Narasimha Rao. "They have underassessed the BJP," he added. "They have done it previously too."

Surveys often prove wrong, partly because it is tough to forecast the outcome of elections involving India's millions of voters. Still, a poor performance could prompt the BJP to push its brand of Hindu nationalism harder, politicians and analysts say. "The BJP campaign will focus on nationalism, Hindutva and corruption," said Shekhar Gupta, a political analyst, using a term that refers to the party's Hindu-first plank. Hindus make up about 80 percent of India's population of 1.3 billion, while Muslims are about 14 percent. Already headline groups associated with the party have reignited their campaign for a temple to the god-king Rama at a site where Hindu zealots razed a 16th-century mosque in 1992. Thousands of Hindu monks and activists linked to the BJP gathered in New Delhi on Sunday in a show of force to back the temple. Hindu fringe groups have stepped up a campaign against the slaughter of cows, which many in India consider sacred, as vigilante groups target Muslims in the livestock trade. Modi is expected to try to recover political ground with giveaways in the next few months for small businesses and farmers, who make up a big chunk of voters. "The state elections will be seen as a litmus test of Modi's popularity," said Simon Finch, fund manager at London-based Ashburton Investments. "However, we would

expect any blemishes to be met with a continuation of the populist measures increasingly evident during the past four years." If the BJP did well, that would be a further catalyst for the market, said Mike Sell, head of Asian investments at asset management firm Alquity, who sees Modi's economic measures, such as a unified goods and services tax, eventually paying off. "Even if they did badly, they wouldn't make us do anything negative and we will use any weakness as a buying opportunity."

Cold, foggy Monday morning in Delhi

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It was a cold and foggy morning in the city on Monday with the minimum temperature settling at 7.6 degrees Celsius, one degree below the season's average. The Met department predicted mainly clear skies which could turn partly cloudy later on the day. The maximum temperature is expected to hover around 24 degrees Celsius. Relative humidity was 97 percent at 8.30 AM, said a Met official. On Saturday, the minimum temperature was 8.2 degrees Celsius while the maximum was 24.8 degrees Celsius.