

Ozone levels breaching limits in Delhi: NGT issues notice to Centre over CPCB's recommendations

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: The National Green Tribunal has sought a response from the Centre on the "feasibility and mechanism" for implementation of the CPCB's recommendations for controlling ozone levels, which were found beyond the permissible limits in some areas of the national capital.

The green body earlier directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and other agencies to submit relevant material explaining why ozone levels in these areas exceeded permissible limits. It had also sought "targeted approaches" that could be adopted for these areas.

In an order dated December 23, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel noted that the CPCB had submitted a report dated December 20 about the measures for control of ozone levels along with some suggestions or recommendations.

The CPCB report said, "It has been recognised globally that control of ozone is only possible through control of its precursors. It is also evident that control of local sources of its precursors may not yield significant benefits in terms of ozone reduction, as both ozone and its precursors can be transported over hundreds of kilometres." "Considering the same, the government has undertaken several initiatives at the national level, to control the precursors of ozone, i.e., nitrous acid (NO_x), volatile organic compound (VOC), methane and carbon



monoxide (CO) to some extent," it said.

The tribunal noted the report about the government's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) of 2019, aimed at reducing air pollution levels across the country, where city-specific clean air action plans had been prepared and rolled out for implementation in 130 non-attainment million-plus cities to improve the air quality.

It also noted the report about various action plans by the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to control NO_x emissions as part of the NCAP and that various waste management rules were being implemented to prevent VOC, CO and methane emissions.

The tribunal noted that the report also mentioned specific interventions for the sectors of transport, power plants and industries, besides the measures for preventing biomass burning, especially paddy straw burning in northern India.

It said along with the Union government control-

"Let notice be issued for filing the response by way of affidavit, especially commenting upon the recommendations that have been made by CPCB," it added.

The tribunal also sought a fresh report from the CPCB, which had to mention how effectively the measures of the Centre were being implemented.

The matter has been posted on April 21 for further proceedings.

The NGT had taken suo motu cognisance of a news report regarding the elevated ozone levels.

During the hearing in September, the NGT noted that as per a Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) report, ozone concentrations surpassed national standards at seven monitoring stations in Delhi last year while nine stations recorded similar breaches during this summer.

The DPCC's report highlighted that dangerous levels of ground-level ozone were recorded in several traffic-heavy areas during April and May 2023. Nehru Nagar witnessed 56 days of high ozone levels, Patparganj 45 days and Aurobindo Marg 38 days.

Nehru Nagar, located near Lajpat Nagar, recorded the highest concentration of ozone at 224.9 micrograms per cubic metre, far above the national standard of 100 micrograms per cubic metre during an eight-hour period.

Other peaks included 188.3 micrograms per cubic metre in Patparganj and 175.4 micrograms per cubic metre in RK Puram, according to the DPCC's findings.

ling ozone concentrations through control of their precursors at national or regional levels, the pollution board's report mentions various suggestions.

The tribunal noted the CPCB's suggestion that "considering the elevated levels of ozone observed during COVID-19 lockdown and that the ozone concentration is also influenced by transboundary movement, soil and biogenic emissions, a detailed study may be required with help of air quality experts to evaluate the reasons for higher ozone levels at various locations in Delhi." It also noted that the CPCB had discussed the issue with air quality experts, who said that a study was required.

"The feasibility and mechanism for implementation of recommendations made by CPCB needs consideration. Hence, we deem it proper to implead the following as respondent, the Union Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change through the secretary," the tribunal said.

Contractor death: Case registered against six, including Priyank Kharge's close aide

KARNATAKA, DEC 29: A case has been registered against the close aide of Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge, Raju Kapanur and five others in connection with hatching a conspiracy to kill BJP MLA Basavaraj Mattimadu and other leaders, police said on Sunday.

The case was registered based on a suicide note by a civil contractor, Sachin Panchal, who had mentioned that the Congress leaders had connived to kill Mattimadu, Siddalinga Swami of Andola Math, BJP leaders Manikanth Rathod and Chandu Patil.

Panchal, a contractor from Bidar, allegedly ended his life by lying down in front of an approaching train on Thursday.

In his suicide note, he had accused Kapanur and his aides of making death

threats.

Meanwhile, the Bidar District-In-Charge Minister, Eshwar Khandre, who holds the forest portfolio, visited Panchal's residence in Bhalki Taluk.

As soon as the officials visited the house, the angry family members shouted at them to go away as they held them responsible for Sachin's death.

Khandre consoled and assured them that action would be taken against the accused persons involved in the death.

"The government will ensure that justice is done, and the accused persons are punished. Government is with you," the minister told the inconsolable family members.

Later, the minister announced an ex gratia of Rs 10 lakh to the family members of Panchal.

"I spoke to the family members who complained to me that the police refused to register a case. I have spoken to senior police officials. Action has been taken against a few policemen," he added.

Khandre said the Government Railway Police (GRP) is probing the suicide case and the government would also consider handing over the investigation to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). The BJP has taken the case seriously. It has demanded that the case should be handed over to the CBI.

"The death note written by Panchal, a contractor from Bidar who committed suicide due to harassment by Minister @PriyankKharge's right-hand man, Raju, reveals alarming and serious infor-

mation that he had given 'Supari' (contract killing) to kill our MLA Basavaraj Mattimadu, BJP leaders Chandu Patil, Manikanth Rathod and Andola Swami," the party's state president B Y Vijayendra said in a statement.

Vijayendra and senior BJP functionaries have also decided to visit Panchal's house soon, party sources said.

Priyank Kharge, who is the son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, hit out at the BJP for making baseless allegations against him and politicising Sachin's death.

He said nowhere in Panchal's death note is his name mentioned, and added that there were financial transactions between Panchal and Kapanur which need to be investigated.

'Physical relations' cannot automatically mean sexual assault: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: The Delhi High Court has acquitted a man in a POCSO case, saying the use of phrase 'physical relations' by the minor survivor cannot automatically mean sexual assault.

A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma allowed the appeal by the accused, who was awarded imprisonment for the remainder of his life, and observed that it was unclear how the trial court concluded that there was any sexual assault when the survivor had voluntarily gone with the accused.

The court asserted that the leap from physical relations or 'samband' to sexual assault and then to penetrative sexual assault must be established by evidence and cannot be deduced as an inference.



"The mere fact that the survivor is below 18 years cannot lead to a conclusion that there was penetrative sexual assault. The survivor, in fact, used the phrase 'physical relations', but there is no clarity as to what she meant by using the said phrase," the court said in the judgement passed on December 23.

"Even the use of the words 'samband banaya' is

not sufficient to establish an offence under Section 3 of the POCSO Act or under Section 376 IPC. Though consent would not matter if the girl is a minor under the POCSO Act, the phrase 'physical relations' cannot be converted automatically into sexual intercourse let alone sexual assault," it held.

The court said the benefit of doubt ought to be in

favour of the accused and, therefore, ruled, "The impugned judgement completely lacks any reasoning and also does not reveal or support any rationale for the conviction. Under such circumstances, the judgement is liable to be set aside. The appellant is acquitted." The complaint in this case was lodged in March 2017 by the minor girl's mother, alleging that her 14-year-old daughter had been lured and kidnapped from her home by an unknown person.

The minor was found in Faridabad along with the accused, who was arrested and subsequently convicted for offence of rape under IPC and penetrative sexual assault under POCSO in December 2023 and later awarded imprisonment for the remainder of his life.

ASTRO ZINDAGI

(Weekly Horoscope Dec 29-Jan 5, 2025)

ARIES

Positive: Ganesha says This is the right time to focus on building new relationships or rekindling old ones. You may feel a sense of enthusiasm and creativity in your personal and professional life and this is a good time to express your ideas and execute your plans.

Finance: You may benefit from exploring new investment opportunities and expanding your financial knowledge. It's also a good time to reevaluate your spending habits and create a more sustainable budget.

Love: Communication and honesty will be key in all of your relationships. Don't be afraid to express your feelings and take bold steps toward building a meaningful relationship. Overall, it is a promising week for love and romance for Aries.

Health: Make sure to take breaks and make rest a priority to avoid fatigue. Aries weekly health horoscope suggests that you may benefit from exploring new forms of exercise or relaxation techniques to maintain balance and reduce stress.

TAURUS

Positive: Ganesha says This week also calls for some introspection, as you may reflect on your values and priorities. Take the time to listen to your inner voice and make decisions that are in line with your authentic self.

Finance: You may benefit from exploring new investment options or taking financial advice from trusted sources. However, be careful of any impulsive spending or risk-taking that may jeopardize your financial stability.

Love: This is a good time to have meaningful conversations with your partner or potential lover and explore new ideas. However, be mindful of any insecurities or jealousy that may arise, and work on building trust and openness in your relationships.

Health: You may benefit from exploring new forms of exercise or self-care that meet your individual needs and interests. However, beware of any tendency towards self-criticism or perfectionism which can harm your mental health.

GEMINI

Positive: Ganesha says This is a good time to focus on your goals and start new creative ventures. However, be mindful of any tendencies of indecision or distraction that may hinder your progress. Stay organized and prioritize what really matters to you.

Finance: Be mindful of your spending habits and stick to your budget to avoid overspending. This is a good time to review your financial goals and make necessary adjustments to your investment portfolio.

Love: You may feel a surge in confidence and charisma that attracts potential partners or strengthens existing relationships. However, be mindful of any tendency towards restlessness or commitment issues that may arise.

Health: Beware of the tendency to overwork or put too much pressure on yourself. Be sure to prioritize rest and recovery to avoid burnout. You may also benefit from exploring alternative healing methods, such as meditation or acupuncture, to promote overall balance and well-being.

CANCER

Positive: Ganesha says This is a good time to prioritize nurturing your relationships and expressing your affection to those you care about. You may also benefit from discovering new social activities or hobbies that allow you to connect with like-minded individuals.

Finance: This is also a good time to review your budget and make any necessary adjustments to ensure that you are on track to meet your financial goals. Don't be afraid to seek guidance from a financial advisor if necessary. Overall, this week calls for a balanced approach to managing your money and investments.

Love: The Cancer weekly love horoscope suggests that this is a good time to communicate your needs and desires in your relationship and be open to exploring new ways to express your love.

Health: Make sure you're also getting enough rest and practicing good sleep hygiene to support your overall health. It's also a good time to try new healthy habits, like getting a new workout or experimenting with healthy recipes in the kitchen. Overall, make self-care a priority this week to support your mind and body.

LEO

Positive: Ganesha says You may be feeling especially ambitious and driven. Use this energy to set big, audacious goals and take bold steps toward achieving them. However, be sure to communicate clearly and avoid any unnecessary confrontation with colleagues or superiors.

Finance: Focus on building a strong foundation for your finances by budgeting, saving for emergencies, and paying off debt. If you need guidance on managing your money effectively, seek the advice of a financial expert. With careful planning and smart decision-making, you can achieve your financial goals and secure a stable financial future.

Love: Use this energy to your advantage and plan a surprise date night or a weekend getaway with your special someone. If you're single, be prepared for unexpected encounters and put yourself on your feet.

Health: Avoid overworking yourself and take time out for rest as well. If you've been neglecting your physical health, this is a great time to start a new exercise routine or healthy eating plan.

VIRGO

Positive: Ganesha says You may have to make some tough decisions, but trust your conscience and stay true to yourself. There may be some tension in your personal life with family members or loved ones. Stay calm and communicate openly to avoid any misunderstandings.

Finance: New financial opportunities may open up to you, but it is important to be cautious and do your research before making any investments. Unexpected expenses may pop up but don't panic, rather focus on finding creative solutions to manage them.

Love: The weekly love horoscope for Virgo suggests that single Virgos may find themselves attracted to someone new, so keep your eyes and heart open. However, be careful not to get too caught up in the excitement of romance, and remember to prioritize your needs and limits.

Health: If you've been neglecting your physical health, it's time to take action. Make an effort to eat healthy foods, stay hydrated, and make it a priority to get enough sleep.

LIBRA

Positive: Ganesha says You should be careful not to get caught up in social gatherings and neglect your responsibilities. Make sure to prioritize your work and take care of your health. In terms of your career, you may receive some unexpected news or opportunities which may lead to positive changes.

Finance: Instead, focus on making smart financial decisions and investments. Have a long-term perspective and don't get swayed by short-term gains. Your natural sense of balance and fairness will come in handy when negotiating deals or investments.

Love: Track down someone who shares your interests and values. If you are already in a relationship, this is an excellent time to strengthen your bond with your partner.

Health: Make time for regular exercise, meditation, and healthy eating habits. Get enough sleep and avoid excessive stress. You may also benefit from indulging in some pampering activities, such as massages or spa treatments. With a little self-care, you can wake up feeling refreshed and ready to take on the world!

SCORPIO

Positive: Ganesha says You may get some unexpected news or opportunities in your career which can lead to a positive change. Keep an open mind and be ready to face new challenges. Trust your gut and rely on your strong intuition to guide you.

Finance: Instead, focus on making smart financial decisions and planning for the future. Take advantage of any opportunity to save money or increase your income.

Love: This can lead to some exciting conversations and memorable experiences together. For those in a relationship, this is an excellent time to focus on communication and strengthening your emotional connection with your partner.

Health: Make time for activities that help you relax and reduce stress, such as meditation or yoga. Also, pay attention to your nutrition and make sure that you feed your body with healthy and nutritious food.

SAGITTARIUS

Positive: Ganesha says This is a great time to connect with friends and loved ones and to express your feelings openly and honestly. You may also feel a renewed sense of confidence and charisma, which may attract new people into your life.

Finance: Be conscious of your financial priorities and avoid buying in haste. You may also benefit from consulting a financial advisor or professional to help you make any complex financial decisions.

Love: Be open to finding new connections and embracing the unexpected. For those who are in a committed relationship, this is a good time to focus on communication and strengthen your emotional connection with your partner.

Health: This is a great time to focus on establishing healthy habits and routines, such as exercise, healthy eating, and adequate rest. You may also benefit from seeking support or advice from a healthcare professional to help you address any health concerns or questions you may have.

CAPRICORN

Positive: Ganesha says Career-wise, this week can be a good time to focus on networking and building relationships with colleagues and mentors. Don't be afraid to reach out if you need help or advice. However, you may also face some challenges in your personal life.

Finance: This is a good time to review your financial goals and prioritize saving and investing for the future. Remember to stay organized and keep track of your expenses to avoid any surprises.

Love: Don't rush into anything without taking the time to get to know the other person and make sure you're on the same page. If you're already in a relationship, this can be a good time to focus on communication and expressing your feelings openly and honestly.

Health: Don't neglect your mental health either; Be sure to take breaks when you need to and make self-care a priority. With a little effort and focus, you can achieve a healthier and more balanced lifestyle.

AQUARIUS

Positive: Ganesha says This is a great time to put yourself out there and network, as opportunities for growth and collaboration can arise. However, be careful not to let others take advantage of your kindness and generosity. Remember to set healthy boundaries and prioritize your needs.

Finance: Make sure you stick to your budget and avoid overspending. This is a good time to review your financial goals and re-evaluate your spending habits. Find ways to save money and invest wisely. With careful planning and discipline, you can maintain a stable financial position and reap some benefits as well.

Love: Be careful not to rush into anything and be sure to communicate clearly and honestly with your partner. Stay open-minded and true to yourself, and you just might find that special someone you've been looking for.

Health: Take time to relax and relieve stress through meditation or other self-care practices. However, be careful not to put too much pressure on yourself and cause fatigue.

PISCES

Positive: Ganesha says You will find that these interactions bring you new opportunities and experiences. Take advantage of this energy to deepen your relationships and make new connections. Additionally, this is a good time to focus on your personal growth and self-improvement.

Finance: Avoid making hasty purchases or taking unnecessary loans. Instead, focus on growing your savings and investing in your long-term financial stability. It may also be a good idea to seek the advice of a financial advisor or expert to help you make any complex financial decisions.

Love: Take some time to consider your feelings and communicate with your partner about any concerns or doubts you may have. This can lead to a deeper understanding and connection between the two of you.

Health: It may be beneficial to schedule a checkup with your healthcare provider and address any health concerns or issues that may have been overlooked. Prioritizing self-care and making healthy choices can have long-term benefits for your overall health and well-being. Remember, taking care of your body is an essential component of living a happy and fulfilling life.