

HC GRANTS TEMPORARY RELIEF TO SIDDARAMAIAH

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



CONTEXT: The Karnataka High Court has granted temporary relief to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah by deferring further proceedings in a case involving alleged irregularities in land allotments by the Mysuru urban development authority (muda).

The court's decision came after Siddaramaiah questioned the legality of the Governor's sanction for investigation against him, arguing that the Governor acted with bias and disregarded the advice of the State

Cabinet. Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing Siddaramaiah, argued that the Governor's decision lacked justification and selectively targeted the Chief Minister.

The petition also highlighted the Governor's failure to notify Siddaramaiah about all relevant applications. The High Court intervened to prevent any precipitate action by the lower court.

The case raises significant constitutional and political questions about the Governor's role in sanctioning prosecutions against sitting Chief Ministers, especially in a politically charged environment.

UNION GOVT. RULES OUT CENTRAL LAW FOR DOCTORS' SAFETY

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



CONTEXT: Amidst widespread protests by doctors demanding stricter safety measures following the tragic murder of a junior doctor in Kolkata, the Union government has ruled out a Central law for healthcare worker protection, citing existing state-level legislation. However, the government has announced an increase in security measures for its hospitals, including a 25% boost in personnel and the deployment of marshals.

Union Government Rules Out Central Law for Doctors' Safety

In response to the ongoing protests by doctors demanding increased safety measures following the tragic murder of a junior doctor in Kolkata, the Union government has decided against introducing a Central protection Act. The government has instead emphasized the existing state-level laws that aim to safeguard healthcare workers.

Increased Security Measures in Union Government Hospitals

To address the immediate concerns and ensure the safety of healthcare professionals, the Centre has announced an increase in security by 25% in all Union government hospitals. This includes the deployment of additional marshals to bolster security measures.

Existing State Laws and Common Provisions

The Health Ministry has highlighted that several states and Union Territories have already enacted legislation to protect healthcare service personnel. These laws cover a wide range of offenses, including violence, intimidation, and obstruction of duties. The ministry has also clarified that the recent Kolkata incident falls under the purview of existing laws, making a Central Act redundant.

Appeal to Doctors to Return to Work

The government has appealed to the striking doctors to resume their duties, emphasizing the need to prioritize patient care. A committee is being formed to strengthen workplace security through extensive consultations with stakeholders.

Focus on Proper Implementation

The Health Ministry has stressed the importance of proper implementation of existing laws rather than introducing new legislation. The ministry has issued guidelines to hospitals, including measures like institutional FIRs, enhanced infrastructure security, and increased surveillance, to ensure the safety of healthcare workers.

IN SC, CENTRE DEFENDS 2019 LAW CRIMINALISING TRIPLE TALAQ

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Union government has defended the law criminalizing triple talaq in the Supreme Court, arguing that it was a necessary step to address the discriminatory practice and protect the rights of Muslim women.

The government emphasized that the law aligns with the Supreme Court's earlier ruling that triple talaq is manifestly arbitrary and violates women's rights.

Government Defends Triple Talaq Law

The Union government has defended its decision to criminalize triple talaq in the Supreme Court. It argued that the practice is discriminatory against Muslim women and violates their rights. The government cited the Supreme Court's earlier ruling that triple talaq is manifestly arbitrary.

Focus on Protecting Women's Rights

The government emphasized that the law aims to protect the rights of Muslim women and the institution of marriage. It argued that the state has a legitimate interest in regulating marriages and can use criminal law to do so.

Addressing Continued Practice

The government noted that despite the 2017 Supreme Court verdict, some Muslim men continued to practice triple talaq. It argued that criminal sanctions are necessary to enforce the prohibition on this discriminatory practice.

Challenges to the Law

Organisations like the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind have challenged the law, arguing that it is discriminatory and disproportionately punishes Muslim men. They also raised concerns about the severity of the punishment compared to other offenses.

TIES WITH RUSSIA, UKRAINE STAND ON THEIR OWN: CENTRE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: The upcoming diplomatic visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ukraine, following his recent visit to Russia, amidst ongoing global scrutiny over India's stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, where he will engage in discussions with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to review bilateral relations and address the ongoing conflict.

PM Modi's Diplomatic Visits to Ukraine and Poland

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit

Poland on August 21-22 and Ukraine on August 23, marking the first visit by an Indian PM to Poland in 45 years and to Ukraine in over 30 years. His visit to Ukraine comes amid global scrutiny following his July visit to Russia, which coincided with a major missile attack on Ukraine.

India's Position on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Responding to Western criticism, Indian officials, including spokesperson Mr. Lal, emphasized that India's approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict is not a zero-sum game. India advocates for diplomacy and dialogue as essential pathways to lasting peace, stressing the need for a negotiated settlement acceptable to both parties.

Strengthening Bilateral Relations

During his meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, PM Modi is expected to review bilateral relations, covering areas such as agriculture, economy, defense, pharmaceuticals, and people-to-people ties. India remains engaged with all stakeholders to foster enduring peace.

CONGRESS LEADER CLARIFIES LATERAL ENTRY INTENT, REJECTS RESERVATION CONCERNS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The ongoing debate over lateral entry into government services has intensified, with Congress leaders criticizing the Modi government's approach, arguing it undermines the reservation system for marginalized communities. In response, Union Ministers defended the policy, citing its origins under the UPA government and emphasizing its transparency and focus on improving governance.

Background and Initial Recommendations

Union Law Minister M. Veerappa Moily, who chaired the second Administrative Reforms Commission in 2005, clarified that the recommendation for lateral entry into government service was intended to add value by bringing in specialized expertise that was not readily available within traditional civil services. He emphasized that the recommendation was meant to be a transparent and supplementary process and was not designed to bypass the usual government recruitment or affect reservation policies.

Opposition Criticism

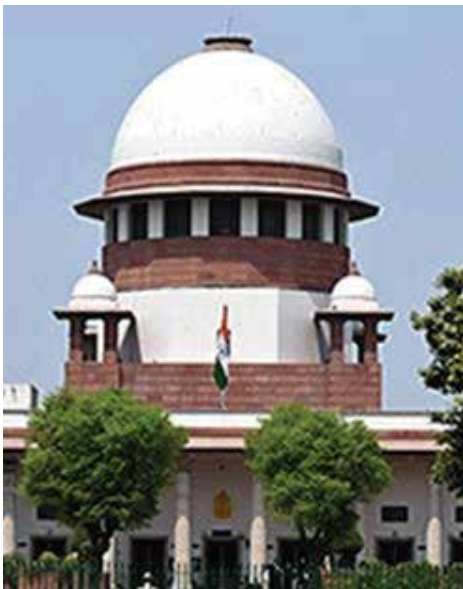
The Opposition, led by Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, criticized the Modi government's implementation of lateral entry, arguing that it undermines the reservation system for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. Rahul Gandhi labeled the policy an attack on marginalized communities, accusing the BJP of using it to fill government positions with RSS members.

Government's Defence

In response, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw defended the policy, pointing out that the concept of lateral entry was developed during the UPA government. They argued that the NDA government has implemented the recommendation transparently, with recruitment handled by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). They assured lateral entry posts are contractual and do not affect the reservation system.

SUPREME COURT TO PRONOUNCE JUDGMENT ON THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY OF ADOLESCENTS TODAY

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



Background:

- The Supreme Court is set to deliver its judgment on a suo motu case regarding the right to privacy of adolescents.
- This case was initiated in response to controversial remarks made in a Calcutta High Court judgment.

Calcutta High Court Remarks:

- The High Court advised adolescent girls to "control their sexual urges."
- It also called for the decriminalization of consensual sexual acts involving adolescents above 16 years.

Supreme Court's Concerns:

- The Supreme Court found the High Court's observations "highly objectionable and completely unwarranted."
- It deemed these remarks as an affront to the rights of dignity and privacy

of adolescents.

- Justice A.S. Oka emphasized that judges should not express personal views or preach from the bench.

Key Points:

- The Supreme Court's verdict is eagerly awaited as it could have significant implications for the rights of adolescents.
- The case highlights the importance of protecting the privacy and dignity of young people.
- The outcome may also influence discussions on the decriminalization of consensual sexual acts among adolescents.



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GENERAL S. PADMANABHAN, WHO LED THE ARMY DURING OPERATION PARAKRAM, PASSES AWAY

PERSONALITY



General S. Padmanabhan, born on December 5, 1940, and passing in August 2024 at 83, served as India's Chief of the Army Staff from September 2000 to December 2002, notably leading during Operation Parakram. Commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in 1959, he held key commands, including the 15 Corps in Kashmir and the Northern and Southern Commands.

Affectionately known as "Paddy," he was remembered for his commitment to soldier welfare and Army modernization. Tributes were paid by military leaders and Tamil Nadu officials. He was an alumnus of the Rashtriya Indian Military College and the National Defence Academy.

GIRISH SAHNI, FORMER DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CSIR, PASSES AWAY

PERSONALITY

Dr. Girish Sahni, former CSIR Director-General, passed away due to a heart attack. He was known for his research on blood clots and clot-buster drugs. Sahni joined IMTECH in 1991 and became its Director in 2005.

He developed clot-specific streptokinase, which was licensed to Nostrum Pharmaceuticals. He also led teams that developed Indigenous clot-buster drugs, STPase and recombinant streptokinase.



A CHANGE IN INDIA'S POWER EXPORT RULES

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The recent amendment to India's power export rules has sparked discussions about its implications for both India and Bangladesh. While it aims to protect Indian power exporters from payment delays, it also raises concerns about Bangladesh's reliance on imported electricity and the potential impact on its energy security.

THE GIST

- On August 14, Reuters reported on the introduction of an amendment to India's power export rules. Purported to hedge against political risks in Bangladesh, it allows Indian power exporters to reroute their output to Indian grids if there is a delay in payments from partner countries.

- The Jharkhand-subsiary of Adani Power supplies 1,496-megawatt net capacity power to Bangladesh from the ultra super-critical thermal power plant in Godda.
- The criticisms emanated from the use of coal imported from the Carmichael mine in Australia into India to produce power for Bangladesh.

The Godda Project: India's First Transnational Power Project

- The Godda plant in Jharkhand supplies 1,496 MW of power to Bangladesh.
- It is India's first transnational power project.
- It aims to replace costly power generation using liquid fuel in Bangladesh.

Criticisms of the Project

- The project has been criticized for using coal imported from Australia.
- The coal price quoted by Adani Power was deemed excessive by Bangladesh.
- High capacity and maintenance charges were also a concern.

Bangladesh's Need for Imports

- Bangladesh has made progress in expanding electricity access but faces constraints in fuel and gas supply.
- This leads to underutilization of its power plants.
- Bangladesh has sought support from the IMF to address energy challenges.

The Latest Amendment

- The amendment allows Indian power exporters to reroute their output to Indian grids if there is a delay in payments from partner countries.
- It aims to mitigate risks associated with instability or economic challenges in neighboring countries.
- While there may be short-term impacts on Bangladesh, the long-term impact is expected to be minimal.

ANALYSIS

The recent amendment to India's power export rules has significant implications for both India and Bangladesh. While it aims to protect Indian exporters from payment delays, it raises concerns about Bangladesh's energy security. The Godda project, a key component of this relationship, has faced criticisms due to its reliance on coal and high costs. Despite Bangladesh's efforts to expand electricity access, its dependence on imported power remains a challenge. The amendment offers India greater flexibility but could potentially impact Bangladesh's energy supply in the short term.

WHAT INFLAMED THE FAR-RIGHT RIOTS IN BRITAIN?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The recent far-right riots in Britain, fuelled by misinformation and a hostile environment created by successive governments, reflect deep-seated social and economic issues. These riots highlight the growing discontent among marginalized communities and the potential for far-right movements to exploit such grievances.

THE GIST

- The immediate spark to the violence was the rumour that the perpetrator of the knife attack in the town of Southport, which killed three young girls, was Muslim and an immigrant who had recently arrived on a boat.
- In this round of race riots, social media played an almost incendiary role, exponentially spreading

misinformation.

- A curious phenomenon of these riots has been the concern towards the English working class by the right-wing media and commentariat.

A SPARK FOR VIOLENCE: FAR-RIGHT RIOTS IN BRITAIN

The Roots of the Riots

- The recent riots are a continuation of a pattern of urban violence in Britain.
- Previous riots involved black and ethnic minority communities.
- This year's riots involved white working-class individuals attacking mosques and hotels.

The Role of Social Media

- Social media played a significant role in spreading misinformation.
- Rumors about the perpetrator of a knife attack fuelled the violence.
- Far-right figures like Tommy Robinson incited their followers.

A Hostile Environment

- Decades of dehumanizing immigrants contributed to the riots.
- Successive governments created a 'hostile environment' for immigrants.
- Political rhetoric reinforced negative perceptions of immigrants.

Economic and Social Discontent

- Unemployment, lack of social housing, and underfunded public services contributed to the unrest.
- Right-wing media focused on the plight of the working class.
- Austerity measures exacerbated economic hardship.

A Far-Right Reaction

- The riots were a reaction to pro-Palestine protests.
- These protests were labeled as hate marches and anti-Semitic.
- The Labour government's response was criticized for being too cautious.

The Implications

- The riots highlight deep-seated social and economic issues.
- Far-right movements can exploit these grievances.
- The government's ability to address the underlying problems is compromised by austerity measures.

ANALYSIS:

The recent far-right riots in Britain highlight a complex interplay of factors. Misinformation spread through social media, coupled with a hostile environment created by successive governments, ignited the violence. Underlying economic and social discontent, exacerbated by austerity measures, fuelled the unrest. The riots underscore the growing influence of far-right movements and the urgent need to address deep-rooted issues in British society.



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SEBI ALLOWS CATEGORY I, II AIFS TO BORROW

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT



CONTEXT: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently introduced several regulatory changes to enhance the functioning of alternative investment funds (AIFs) and address irregularities in initial public offerings (IPOs). These measures aim to provide greater flexibility to AIFs while ensuring investor protection and preventing fraudulent activities in IPOs.

SEBI's Regulatory Changes

Flexibility for Alternative Investment Funds

- SEBI has allowed Category I and II AIFs to borrow for operational flexibility.
- Borrowings are capped at 10% of investible funds or 20% of drawdown value.
- Investors will be informed about leveraging.
- A cooling-off period of 30 days is required between borrowings.
- Borrowings should be the last resort, and costs are borne by investors who fail to provide drawdown amounts.

- The tenure of Large Value Funds (LVFs) has been extended to five years.

Curbing Intermingling Bids in IPOs

- SEBI plans to prevent inter-bidding among different investor categories in IPOs.
- Many applications in the employee category have been rejected due to intermingling.
- Stock exchanges currently accept all applications without verification.
- SEBI may require firms to provide employee data before issue opening.
- Exchanges may stop publishing subscription numbers during the book-building process.
- Automation of the matching process is being considered.

ANALYSIS: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently implemented regulatory changes to enhance flexibility for alternative investment funds and address irregularities in IPOs. These measures aim to provide greater operational freedom to AIFs while ensuring investor protection and preventing fraudulent activities in IPOs. By implementing these changes, SEBI is contributing to a more efficient and transparent capital market.

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CHINESE, PHILIPPINE SHIPS COLLIDE IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships collided near Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea, damaging at least two vessels. China accused the Philippines of deliberately causing the collision, while the Philippines blamed China.

The incident occurred near a disputed atoll in the Spratly Islands, where Vietnam and Taiwan also have overlapping claims. There were no reports of injuries.

U.S., SOUTH KOREA BEGIN DRILLS AIMED AT 'DETECTING' THE NORTH

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The U.S. and South Korea have started a large-scale military exercise to strengthen their defense capabilities against North Korea. North Korea has accused the allies of practicing an invasion. The exercise comes amid heightened tensions and North Korea's increased weapons demonstrations. The allies aim to enhance their readiness against various North Korean threats.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry has condemned the exercise as provocative and justified its nuclear ambitions.



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