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Judge's transfer is not related to 'rumours': SC

POLITY

The Supreme Court issued a statement on Friday that "misinformation and rumours" are being spread with regard to an "incident" at the residence of Delhi High Court judge, Justice Yashwant Varma, compelling the apex court Collegium to transfer him out. The statement from the Supreme Court came after a report by The Times of India, followed by source based online media reports, that a "huge pile of cash" was recovered when a fire broke out in the residential bungalow of the judge.

A JURY OF JUDGES	
WHAT IS THE COLLEGIUM SYSTEM? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forum which decides on appointments, transfers (A/Ts) of judges. • Comprised of Chief Justice of India, 4 Supreme Court Judges • President merely approves CJI's choice 	CRITICISMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born from 'Three Judges Cases' which gave primacy to CJI's call on A/Ts • Judiciary gets greater say than Executive on A/Ts • Administrative burden of checking professional background data • Closed-door affair, lacks transparency • Exclusivity sidelines talented junior judges, advocates
SOME OF THE CHANGES SOUGHT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CJI cannot make unilateral choice • Consulted judges' views need to be in writing • Non-compliance must make CJI choice non-binding • Transfer of Judges reviewable only in case of non-compliance 	

What is the collegium system in the Indian judiciary?

- The Collegium system is a system for the appointment and transfer of judges in the Supreme Court and High Court.
- It is not rooted in the Constitution. Instead, it has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court.
- Under the system, the Chief Justice of India (CJI), along with four senior-most Supreme Court judges, recommends the appointment and transfer of judges.
- A High Court Collegium, meanwhile, is led by the incumbent Chief Justice and the two senior most judges of that court.

Chhattisgarh govt. announces new scheme for special incentives for 'Maoist-free' panchayats

INTERNAL SECURITY

To encourage bulk surrenders in Chhattisgarh's Bastar, the State government has announced a new scheme offering construction works worth ₹1 crore and other incentives for "Maoist-free" panchayats. Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said on Friday that under the 'Elvad Panchayat Abhiyan', a panchayat would have to facilitate the surrender of every resident of its constituent villages who had been involved in Naxal activities. Following this, the village will send a proposal declaring itself "Maoist-free".



What is Maoism?

- **About:** Maoism is a form of communism developed by **Mao Tse Tung**. It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances.
- Mao called this process, the '**Protracted People's War**', where the emphasis is on '**military line**' to capture power.
- **Maoist Ideology:** The central theme of Maoist ideology is the use of **violence and armed insurrection** as a means to capture State power.
- '**Bearing of arms is non-negotiable**' as per the Maoist insurgency doctrine.

- **Indian Maoists:** The largest and the most violent Maoist formation in India is the **Communist Party of India (Maoist)** formed in 2004.
- The **CPI (Maoist)** and its front organizations were banned under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**.
- Front Organizations are the **off-shoots** of the parent Maoist party, which professes a separate existence to **escape legal liability**.

LS approves Demands for Grants of ₹50 lakh crore for various Ministries

POLITY

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed the Demands for Grants for various Ministries for 2025-26, approving expenditure of more than ₹50 lakh crore. The House passed the Demands for Grants by applying the guillotine, which means the funds for the Ministries it [guillotine] is applied on are considered approved without a discussion. The Lower House also passed the Appropriation Bill (3), 2025, moved by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

About the demand for grants:

Definition of demand of grants:

- Demand for grants are estimates of expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India that are included in the annual financial statement (Budget) and must be voted on in the Lok Sabha.
- These grants are submitted in pursuance of **Article 113** (Procedure in Parliament with respect to estimates) of the Indian Constitution.

Description of demand of grants:

- It includes provisions with respect to revenue expenditure, capital expenditure, grants to State and UT governments together with loans and advances.
- In general, one demand for grant is submitted for each ministry or department. However, multiple demands are provided for large ministries and departments.

Types of demand for grants:

- Article 115 of the Indian Constitution provides for **Supplementary, additional or excess** grants.
- **Supplementary grants:** The President shall cause to be laid before both Houses of Parliament a demand, if the amount authorized under Article 114 (Appropriation Bills) is found to be **insufficient for the purposes**.
- **Additional grants:** When a need has arisen for additional expenditure **upon some new service** not contemplated in the Budget, the President shall cause to be laid before both Houses of Parliament such demand.
- **Excess grants:** Similarly, if any money has been spent on any service **in excess of the amount granted** for that service, the President shall cause to be laid before both Houses of Parliament showing a demand for excess grants.

There is progress on GM food crops, says official

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A head of a fresh series of hearings in the Supreme Court next month over genetically modified (GM) food crops, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) said there was "progress" on this front. "The matter is sub judice but GM mustard stories are being taken up again," DBT Secretary Rajesh Gokhale said at a biotechnology event on Friday. The DBT, which has for years funded research and development into transgenic and GM food crops, comes under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Regulatory Framework of GM Crops in India

- **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006:** It prohibits import, manufacture, use or sale of GM food without FSSAI's approval.
- **Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM):** Under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), this committee monitors various aspects of R & D projects involving GM organism.
- **State Biotechnology Coordination Committee (SBCC):** Reviews the safety and control measures in various institutions handling Genetically Modified Organism (GMO).
- **District Level Committee (DLC):** Inspects, investigates and reports to the SBCC or the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) about compliance or non-compliance of regulatory guidelines.

- GM crop Approval process: It is given on a case-to-case basis after thorough scientific evaluation of health and environment safety as per applicable guidelines made under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Concerns about GM Crops

- Human Health: Cultivation of GM herbicide tolerant crops relies heavily on glyphosate, it has been used as a herbicide in the USA since 1974.
- Glyphosate was classified as "probable carcinogen" by the World Health Organization in 2015.
- Biodiversity loss: Presence of the bar gene makes GM mustard plants herbicide tolerant (HT) to the spraying of glufosinate ammonium (a herbicide used for killing weeds)
- However, it was contended that the HT trait would destroy the opportunity to do mixed farming prevalent in India because it would affect all vegetation in and around the field where the HT crop is cultivated.
- Contamination: Gene flow from GM crops poses a threat to wild and weedy crop relatives, non-GM crops and foods, and organic farming.
- For e.g., There have been transgene escape events in Canada with GM canola, flax, wheat and pigs.
- Effect on honeybees and other pollinators: Overuse of herbicides which may indirectly affect the weed population of an area and thus reduce the availability of pollen or nectar.

SEBI eases investment norms for AMC fund managers and CIOs

ECONOMY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has eased norms pertaining to the share of compensation that fund managers and chief investment officers (CIOs) of asset management companies (AMCs) are mandated to invest in the units they manage.

About Asset Management Companies (AMCs):

- An AMC is a financial institution that **pools funds from multiple investors** and **invests in various financial instruments**, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate, **to generate returns for the investors in exchange for a fee.**
- AMCs are commonly referred to as **money managers** or **money management firms.**
- AMCs come in many **different forms and structures**, such as:
 - **Hedge funds**
 - **Mutual funds**
 - Index funds
 - **Exchange-traded funds**
 - Private equity funds
 - Other funds
- Those **that offer public mutual funds, or ETFs**, are also **known as investment companies or mutual fund companies.**
- In addition, they invest on behalf of **various types of clients**, such as:
 - **Retail investors**
 - **Institutional investors**
 - Public sector (**government** organizations)
 - **Private sector**
 - High-net-worth clients
- The role of an AMC is **to make investment decisions** on its investors' behalf **and manage the assets** in their portfolios. This involves choosing a suitable mix of investments and helping investors grow their money.
- To achieve this, an asset management company **appoints professionally qualified fund managers** with investment expertise and experience to manage the assets.
- **Fund managers employ investment strategies and use financial tools**, such as risk management techniques, to help manage the portfolio and protect investors' assets.
- Additionally, AMCs **have a support system** in place in the form of **research analysts** who **assist the fund managers.**
- The distinguishing factor for AMCs is their **assets under management (AUM)**. It indicates the **total value of investments that the AMC manages** on investors' behalf.
- **When the AUM** of an AMC **grows**, it **represents the faith and confidence** that investors have in the AMC to manage their money.



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