



Current Affairs of the Day

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SC to study context of charges against judges

- The Supreme Court on Monday decided to launch a detailed examination into the circumstances under which a person can make public allegations of corruption against the judiciary.
- A three-judge Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra also decided to hear arguments on laying down procedure to be adopted if such statements of corruption are made in public against sitting as well as retired judges.

Under review | The Supreme Court on Monday decided to take a detailed look into these issues:

- If statements on 'judicial corruption' are made in public, under what circumstances can they be made
- The procedure to be adopted if such statements of corruption are
- made in public against sitting as well as retired judges
- When some matter is sub judice, to what extent... can the matter be argued through the media or another mode



Prashant Bhushan case:

- The Bench framed the two questions while hearing a contempt case initiated against advocate Prashant Bhushan for his remarks on corruption in judiciary in an interview to Tehelka magazine published in 2009.
- "In what circumstances can such statements [on judicial corruption] be made? Under what circumstances can these allegations need to be made public... We need to hear arguments on these issues," Justice Mishra observed, listing the case for hearing on Monday.

1992 judgment:

- The Bench referred to the majority judgment delivered by Justice (as he was then) J.S. Verma for a Constitution Bench in 1992 concerning the removal of Justice V. Ramaswami, a Supreme Court judge.



- The judgment had laid down the procedure to deal with allegations against a sitting judge. The judge had to be given a fair opportunity to be heard before an inquiry committee formed under the Judges Inquiry Act of 1968. The judgment had limited the inquiry process against a judge to be done within a tight and limited circle of high judicial functionaries and parliamentarians. It did not want “busybodies to meddle”.
- The dominating spirit of the 1992 judgment was to “preserve the right, interest and dignity of the judge, which is commensurate with the dignity of all the institutions and functionaries involved in the process”.
- The Bench said the judgment was against publicly making allegations against judges. But senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, for Mr. Bhushan, said the “idea that you [a critic] cannot go to the Press is a bad decision”.

Indian, Nepalese diplomats discuss bilateral projects

- Indian and Nepalese diplomats on Monday met in Kathmandu and reviewed the status of a number of ongoing bilateral projects.
- This is the first diplomat-level meeting between the two sides in the current year that saw the **Kalapani territorial dispute**.

Issues discussed:

- The talks marked the Eighth Meeting of Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism. The meeting did not take up the territorial dispute, but the officials reviewed the status of construction of bridges over the **Mahakali river**, which is near the disputed region.
- Both sides underlined the need for the expeditious implementation of the bilateral projects. In this connection, they agreed to undertake necessary measures to timely address problems and obstacles in the course of implementation.
- The two teams, led by Nepalese Foreign Secretary Shankar Bairagi and Indian Ambassador in Kathmandu Vinay Mohan Kwatra, discussed cross-border railways, **Arun-III hydropower project**, **Pancheshwar multipurpose project**, **construction of the Nepal Police Academy** and **Ramayana projects** among other items.



- The discussion came two days after Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli greeted his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on the 74th Independence day of India and sought “meaningful bilateral dialogue”.

4G SIM cards disconnect ASHAs

Vital workforce | Research by ORB Media, conducted in 2020, reveals that community health worker (CHW) programmes can improve the health status of communities, irrespective of social or economic circumstance

Key findings of the study

- CHWs can enable more equitable access to healthcare in their communities
- The survival rate of children under 5 increases as the number of CHWs in a country rises
- CHW programmes can help bring health equity to marginalised groups

How was the study conducted?

- A statistical model, which established an “expected child mortality rate” for a country,

was created using data from 160 countries

- Based on this model, seven countries were examined and rated on a scale of 1 to 5 - Thailand (1), Bangladesh (1), Chile (1), Honduras (1), Mexico (1), Hungary (2) and Argentina (3). It was found that all had deployed CHWs as a cost effective strategy for community healthcare. “1” indicates an above average performance while “5” indicates a below par performance



- At the frontline of the country’s battle against COVID-19, **Accredited Social Health Activists, or ASHAs**, in Haryana have gone on strike after they were issued new Jio 4G SIM cards and their old SIMs disabled to ensure they migrate to Android phones for better monitoring of service delivery.
- But the workers, paid poorly with salaries often delayed, say they cannot afford smartphones to use the new SIM cards.

Value Added Information

What is ASHA?

- Under the National Health Mission, ASHA are envisaged to be community health volunteers. Under the National Health Mission, ASHA are entitled to task/activity based incentives.



- Under the National Health Mission, ASHAs act as a critical link between Healthcare delivery system and community. The details of task assigned ASHAs under National Health Mission are given below:

The details task assigned to ASHA workers under National Health Mission

1. To create awareness and provide information to the community on determinants of health such as nutrition, basic sanitation and hygienic practices, healthy living and working conditions, information on existing health services and the need for timely use of health services.
2. To counsel women and families on birth preparedness, importance of safe delivery, breastfeeding and complementary feeding, immunization, contraception and prevention of common infections including Reproductive Tract Infection/Sexually Transmitted Infection (RTIs/STIs) and care of the young child.
3. To mobilize the community and facilitate people's access to health and health related services available at the village/sub-centre/primary health centres, such as Immunization, Ante Natal Check-up (ANC), Post Natal Check-up (PNC), ICDS, sanitation and other services being provided by the government.
4. To work with the Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee to develop a comprehensive village health plan, and promote convergent action by the committee on social determinants of health. In support with VHSNC, ASHAs will assist and mobilize the community for action against gender based violence.
5. To arrange escort/accompany pregnant women & children requiring treatment/ admission to the nearest pre- identified health facility i.e. Primary Health Centre/Community Health Centre/First Referral Unit (PHC/CHC/FRU).
6. To provide community level curative care for minor ailments such as diarrhoea, fevers, care for the normal and sick newborn, childhood illnesses and first aid. She will be a provider of Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) under Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme.
7. She will also act as a depot holder for essential health products appropriate to local community needs. A Drug Kit will be provided to each ASHA. Contents



of the kit will be based on the recommendations of the expert/technical advisory group set up by the Government of India. These will be updated from time to time, States can add to the list as appropriate.

8. To act as a care provider can be enhanced based on state needs. States can explore the possibility of graded training to the ASHA to provide palliative care, screening for non communicable diseases, childhood disability, mental health, geriatric care and others.
9. To provide information on about the births and deaths in her village and any unusual health problems/disease outbreaks in the community to the Sub-Centres/Primary Health Centre. She will promote construction of household toilets under Total Sanitation Campaign.

To improve the financial security of ASHAs, the Government of India has already taken several steps in addition to routine and recurring incentives, which inter-alia includes :

- Benefits of Life insurance, accident insurance and pension to eligible ASHAs and ASHA facilitators are extended by enrolling them under:
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojana (premium of Rs. 330 contributed by GOI).
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Beema Yojana (premium of Rs. 12 contributed by GOI).
- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan Dhan (PM-SYM) (50% contribution of premium by GOI and 50% by beneficiaries).
- The government has also approved a cash award of Rs. 20,000/- and a citation to ASHAs who leave the programme after working as ASHAs for minimum of 10 years, as acknowledgement of their contribution.

Afghan prisoner release process hits an impasse

- Afghan authorities and the Taliban have hit an impasse over the planned release of hundreds of insurgents after opposition from some foreign governments, officials said on Monday, apparently stalling peace talks.



- The negotiations were expected to begin within days after prominent Afghans met in Kabul on August 9 and approved the release of 400 Taliban prisoners — including many involved in deadly attacks — removing a crucial precondition to talks.
- While Afghan authorities freed 80 Taliban prisoners on Thursday, there have been no further releases since then. “There is no plan to release any prisoner today also”.

Concerns:

- The delay has “something to do with some countries’ concerns about some people in the list,” said Ghulam Farooq Majroh, a member of the Afghan negotiating team.
- Another NSC official said some “international partners have reservations” about releasing the prisoners.
- The NSC officials and Mr. Majroh did not identify the countries, but Paris and Canberra have objected to the release of several insurgents accused of killing French and Australian nationals and soldiers.

India's seafood export volume drops in FY20

- India exported 12,89,651 tonnes of seafood worth ₹46,662.85 crore (\$6.68 billion) during 2019-20, largely cushioning the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Frozen shrimp remained the major export item in terms of quantity and value followed by frozen fish. The U.S. and China were the major importers of Indian seafood.
- During FY20, exports improved in rupee terms by 0.16%. But, the quantity declined by 7.39%. The exports also reduced by 0.74% in terms of U.S. Dollar during the period, said a communication here.
- In FY19, India had exported 13,92,559 tonnes of seafood worth ₹46,589.37 crore (\$6,728.50 million), the communication said.