



## Current Affairs of the Day

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## Inscription on Vijayanagar king's death discovered

**News:** The first-ever epigraphical reference to the date of death of Vijayanagar king Krishnadevaraya has been discovered at Honnenahalli in the Tumakuru district.

### Highlights:

1. As per the inscription, Krishnadevaraya, one of the greatest emperors of India who ruled from the South, died on October 17, 1529, Sunday, and incidentally, this day was marked by a lunar eclipse.
2. The inscription is engraved on a slab kept on the north side of the Gopalakrishna temple at Honnenahalli in the Tumakuru district and is written in Kannada.
3. The inscription also registers the gift of village Honnenahalli in Tumakuru for conducting worship to the god Veeraprasanna Hanumantha of Tumakuru.

## Same-sex marriages will cause havoc, govt. tells HC

**News:** The Centre on Thursday opposed any changes to the existing laws on marriage to recognise same-sex marriages, saying such interference would cause “a complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country”.

### Highlights:

1. “Living together as partners and having a sexual relationship by same-sex individuals is not comparable with the Indian family unit concept of a husband, a wife and children, which necessarily presuppose a biological man as a ‘husband’, a biological woman as a ‘wife’ and the children born out of their union,” the Centre argued in the Delhi High Court.
2. It said the 2018 judgment of the Supreme Court decriminalising homosexual sex was “neither intended to nor did it in fact, legitimise the human conduct in question”.
3. In an affidavit filed in response to petitions seeking to recognise same-sex marriage, the Central government said, “despite the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the petitioners cannot claim a fundamental right for same-sex marriage being recognised under the laws of the country”.



4. The Centre submitted that “registration of marriage of same-sex persons also results in a violation of existing personal as well as codified law provisions — such as ‘degrees of prohibited relationship’; ‘conditions of marriage’; ‘ceremonial and ritual requirements’ under the personal laws governing the individuals”.

## INCOIS to go for aerial mapping of the ocean floor

**News:** The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) is planning to take the help of the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) for aerial mapping of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep to get a better picture of the ocean floor, also called ‘bathymetric’ study.

### Highlights:

1. NRSC has already done a similar high-resolution topographic Airborne Laser Terrain Mapping (ALTM) for the entire coastal areas of the country and we are in the process of integrating the data for a 3D multi-hazard mapping of both the east and west coastline for a more precise picture of the ocean floor.
2. Such a study has become imperative in view of the recent tsunamis of the Indonesian coasts where more than the quake-related high waves, the damage was due to landslides under the sea beds causing sudden wave surges leading to much damage without giving sufficient time to alert people.

## Govt. to monitor OTT content

**News:** For the first time, the government, under the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, has brought in detailed guidelines for digital content on both digital media and Over The Top (OTT) platforms, while giving itself overriding powers.

### Highlights:

1. The new rules lay down a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism. However, over and above this framework, the government has equipped itself with “emergency” powers to block public access to any information.
2. The rules state, “in case of emergency nature” the Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, may “if he is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient and justifiable” give orders to block access. Such orders can be released “without giving an opportunity of hearing” to the publishing platform.



3. The first level of the grievance redressal system will be at the level of each OTT provider. Each complaint will have to be addressed within 15 days.
4. If the complaint is not satisfactorily addressed, then the complainant can scale it up to a self-regulatory body collectively established by the OTTs.
5. This body will be headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court, a High Court, or an independent eminent person from the field of media, broadcasting, entertainment, child rights, human rights or other relevant fields. This self-regulatory body also has “censuring” powers in case of any incriminating content.
6. At the third tier, the government has equipped itself with overriding powers in the form of an “oversight mechanism”. An inter-ministerial committee will perform this function and it will largely have the same powers as the collective self-regulatory body of the OTTs.
7. The government also clarified that no new law has been framed. And the government already has the power to step in, in case of an emergency under the existing law.

## Tighter norms in place for social media

**News:** The Centre on Thursday notified new, stricter guidelines for social media intermediaries, making it mandatory for platforms such as WhatsApp to help identify the “originator” of “unlawful” messages.

### Highlights:

1. It will also require the likes of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to take down such messages within a specific timeframe and set up grievance redressal mechanisms. They will also have to assist government agencies in the investigation.
2. According to the government the basic essence of ‘The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021’ is a “soft-touch oversight” mechanism to deal with issues such as the persistent spread of fake news, abuse of these platforms to share morphed images of women.
3. Think-tanks and experts welcomed the new “well-intended” rules, stating that these bring clarity on the responsibilities of intermediaries. However, they added that in the current form, these guidelines could undermine the principles



of open and accessible Internet and violate the right to privacy and free speech of users.

4. They noted that these could also lead to an erosion of the 'safe harbour' protection given to intermediaries under Section 79 of the IT Act.
5. On receiving a court order or being notified by the appropriate government agency, an intermediary will need to remove or disable access to any unlawful information "as early as possible, but in no case later than 36 hours".

## London court's nod for Nirav Modi's extradition

**News:** The Westminster Magistrates Court in London allowed India's extradition request against businessman Nirav Modi, who is wanted in connection with the ₹13,758 crores Punjab National Bank fraud, ruling that a prima facie case had been made out.

### Highlights:

1. The order will be sent to the Secretary of State for the United Kingdom's Home Department for further action. The Secretary of State has to take a decision within two months or seek an extension from the High Court.
2. Appealing the Secretary of State's decision in the High Court is only possible with the court's permission. Notice of application for approval to appeal has to be sought within 14 days of extradition, or discharge, ordered by the Secretary of State.
3. Unless there is an appeal, a requested person must be extradited within 28 days of the Secretary of State's decision to order extradition (subject to any appeal), according to the UK's official website.
4. In its order, the Westminster Magistrates Court held that there were sufficient grounds warranting Mr Nirav Modi's trial in India. It also accepted the evidence put forth by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate that he had conspired to destroy the proof against him and intimidate witnesses.

Background:

### What is Extradition?

As defined by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, 'Extradition is the delivery on the part of one State to another of those whom it is desired to deal with for crimes of which they have been accused or convicted and are justifiable in the Courts of the other State'. An Extradition request for an accused can be initiated in the case of under-investigation, under-trial and convicted criminals. In cases



under investigation, abundant precautions have to be exercised by the law enforcement agency to ensure that it is in possession of prima facie evidence to sustain the allegation before the Courts of Law in the Foreign State.

### **What is the Legislative Basis for Extradition in India?**

The Extradition Act of 1962 provides India's legislative basis for extradition. To consolidate and amend the law relating to the extradition of fugitive criminals and to provide for matters connected therewith, or incidental thereto, the Extradition Act of 1962 was enacted. It consolidated the law relating to the extradition of a criminal fugitive from India to foreign states. The Indian Extradition Act, 1962 was substantially modified in 1993 by Act 66 of 1993.

### **Who is the nodal authority for Extradition in India?**

CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India is the Central/Nodal Authority that administers the Extradition Act and it processes incoming and outgoing Extradition Requests.

Requests for extradition on behalf of the Republic of India can only be made by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, which formally submits the request for Extradition to the requested State through diplomatic channels. Extradition is not available at the request of members of the public.

### **Which countries can India make an extradition request to?**

India is able to make an extradition request to any country. India's treaty partners have obligations to consider India's requests. In the absence of a treaty, it is a matter for the foreign country, in accordance with its domestic laws and procedures, to determine whether the country can agree to India's extradition request on the basis of assurance of reciprocity. Similarly, any country can make an extradition request to India. Extradition is possible from the non-treaty States as Section 3(4) of the Indian Extradition Act, 1962 provides for the process of extradition with non-treaty foreign States.

### **What are Extradition Treaties?**

Section 2(d) of Extradition Act 1962 defines an 'Extradition Treaty' as a Treaty, Agreement or Arrangement made by India with a Foreign State, relating to the Extradition of fugitive criminals and includes any treaty, agreement or arrangement relating to the Extradition of fugitive criminals made before the 15th day of August 1947, which extends to and is binding on, India. Extradition treaties are traditionally bilateral in character.

## **President's Rule in Puducherry notified**



**News:** President's Rule was imposed in the Union Territory of Puducherry and the Legislative Assembly was placed under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the Union Home Ministry.

**Highlights:**

1. The notification said President Ram Nath Kovind had received a report from the administrator of the Union Territory and after considering the report and other information", the President was "satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the administration of the Union Territory of Puducherry cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 (20 of 1963).
2. Union Territories are administered in accordance with the provisions of Article 239 to 241 of the Constitution, and according to the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961, certain subjects pertaining to Union Territories, namely Legislative matters, Finance and Budget and Services, have been allocated to the Home Ministry.
3. The decision comes days after the Congress-led government lost power in a vote of confidence.

## Google asked to compensate newspapers

**News:** The Indian Newspaper Society (INS) has urged Google India to compensate print media publishers for use of news as it is proprietary content generated by them.

**Highlights:**

1. The print media industry invested heavily in journalism. Indian publishers had been providing quality journalism with credible news that Google's web crawlers shared with its readers.
2. Google must consider increasing the publisher's share of advertising revenue to 85%.
3. The INS requested Google to give more prominence to content from registered news publishers to deal with fake news.

## Why countries are desperate to defy the odds and access Mars

**News:** Three countries have reached the Red Planet with missions in the past few weeks. The desire to access Mars has endured despite a significant number of



failed efforts. A lot is at stake both scientifically and geopolitically for governments attempting exploration. Getting there takes seven months, and landing on a surface where the average temperature is about  $-60^{\circ}\text{C}$  involves “seven minutes of terror.”

### What is the Temptation?

1. Despite the obstacles, active exploration of Mars has ramped up of late – pushing scientific discovery forward and potentially inching us closer to human habitation.
2. The United Arab Emirates inserted a probe into Martian orbit earlier this month, the US followed with a NASA rover landing, and China has its own probe orbiting the Red Planet in anticipation of landing a rover in May.
3. One reason for the cluster of missions is that Mars was relatively close due to the planetary alignment last year, presenting a limited launch window.
4. The current round of exploration is expected to include several breakthroughs. NASA's Perseverance rover is collecting Mars rocks for analysis for the first time, and it's equipped with a microphone giving us our first listen to sounds from our neighbouring planet.
5. In a geopolitical sense, the more that can be learned about the planet, the more it can be put to strategic use.