



Current Affairs of the Day

- Cooperation Ministry will usurp States' rights: Oppn.
- The privacy policy will be on hold till the law is framed:
WhatsApp
- Terrain, facilities will affect delimitation in J&K, says ECI
- India concerned at events in Afghanistan, says Jaishankar
- Journalist moves SC against sedition law
- IT rules govt. plea listed for July 16
- Judges should not act like emperors, says SC
- Himalayan yaks to be insured



Cooperation Ministry will usurp States' rights: Oppn.

The government said the Ministry “will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country” and do much to streamline the processes for “ease of doing business” and enable the development of Multi-State Co-operative Banks” (MSCBs). Significantly, the MSCBs have now been solely taken under the Reserve Bank of India for regulatory purposes.

Cooperation is a concurrent list subject:

1. Opposition leaders, however, said the move was to “hijack the cooperative movement” that currently falls under the State governments.
2. They [the BJP] want total control of the cooperative movement across the country and that’s why they have made Amit Shah in charge of the Ministry.
3. Cooperatives is a State subject under entry 32 of the State List under Schedule 7 of the Constitution.
4. The cooperative model has been a source of political power in states such as Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.
5. Many of these cash-rich cooperatives are controlled by Opposition parties, such as the Nationalist Congress Party, the CPI(M) and the Congress in some of these States.
6. The opposition alleged that the move was taken with an eye on the cash reserves of the cooperative banks.
7. Some representatives welcomed the move as an important part of rural development. Whatever development has taken place in rural areas in Maharashtra owes a lot to the rise of cooperatives in the State.
8. There is a limit to what private enterprise can do when it comes to rural development and Prime Minister Modi understands that. Ministry of Cooperation will require an Act of Parliament to be notified, as cooperatives in Maharashtra are under a State Act of 1960, but it will be very beneficial if the cooperative movement spreads across the country.



The privacy policy will be on hold till the law is framed: WhatsApp

WhatsApp LLC told the Delhi High Court that till the Data Protection Bill comes into force, it will not compel users to opt for its new privacy policy as it has been put on hold, and will be implemented “if Parliament allows it”.

Highlights:

1. The court observed that even though the implementation had been put on hold, the policy still continued to exist.
2. The Personal Data Protection Bill seeks to regulate the use of an individual's data by the government and private companies. The Joint Committee of Parliament examining the Bill has been given an extension till the monsoon session of Parliament to submit its report.
3. The court was hearing the appeals of Facebook and its firm WhatsApp against the single judge order refusing to stop the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) order directing a probe into WhatsApp's new privacy policy.

Terrain, facilities will affect delimitation in J&K, says ECI

Panel completes consultations; will also identify seats for the SCs and STs

Highlights:

1. The Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission will base its final report on the 2011 Census and will also take into account the topography, difficult terrain, means of communication and convenience available while delimiting seven additional seats for the 83-member Assembly of the Union Territory (UT), besides granting reservation to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Schedule Caste (SC) communities.
2. Delimitation is not a mathematical exercise. It must reflect the political aspirations of society bound in a particular geography. Though the population forms the base [for delimitation], the Commission shall take into account constituencies' practicality, geographical compatibility, topography, physical features, means of communication and convenience available.



3. The earlier delimitation panels did not acknowledge the difficult terrains and people's difficulties.
4. The Commission will also specify the number of seats to be reserved for the SCs and the STs in the Legislative Assembly of the U.T. It will be for the first time that seats will be reserved for the STs in J&K.
5. J&K has already seven seats reserved for SC people, mainly in the Kathua-Samba belt in the Jammu region.
6. It will be for the first time that STs, including Bakerwals and Gujjars, will get reservations in this delimitation exercise. The maximum population of Gujjars and Bakwerwals are from the Pir Panjal Valley, comprising Poonch and Rajouri districts, in the Jammu region.

India concerned at events in Afghanistan, says Jaishankar

India is concerned about the "direction of events" in Afghanistan, it said in a press conference with Russia.

Regional security

1. The press conference in Moscow was convened within hours of the Taliban's declaration that around 85% of Afghan territory is now under its control. The Taliban has taken over border crossings with Iran and Tajikistan.
2. The Taliban delegation promised not to allow "anyone to use the soil of Afghanistan against any one country, nor will tolerate the intervention of others. It also assured that the Taliban "are not going to target diplomats, embassies and consulates, NGOs and their staff".
3. The assurance of safety for the diplomatic missions and staff is important for India which has been closely monitoring the security situation in Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif housing Indian missions.
4. The Afghan situation will also come up for further consultation at Dushanbe where the ministerial meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will take place next week. The issue will come up also at Tashkent which will host a conference of Central and Southern Asia.



Journalist moves SC against sedition law

Curbing debate and dissent:

1. Senior journalists have moved the Supreme Court saying the sedition law is being applied by the government against journalists, activists, filmmakers and civil society in a “politicised fashion”.
2. They cited the cases of climate activist Disha Ravi, filmmaker Aisha Sultana and journalists Vinod Dua and Siddique Kappan in this regard.
3. There has been a dramatic jump in charging a person with the offence of sedition since 2016. In 2019, 93 cases were on the ground of sedition as compared to the 35 cases that were filed in 2016. The same constitutes a 165% increase.
4. Of these 93 cases, charge sheets were filed in a mere 17% of cases and even worse, the conviction rate was an abysmally low 3.3%,” the application said.
5. The top court has recently said it would examine the use of the sedition provision (Section 124A) of the Indian Penal Code. The provision has a chilling effect on the right to free speech.

IT rules govt. plea listed for July 16

App debate: There are several petitions in High Courts against the regulatory framework for social media intermediaries.

Highlights:

1. The Supreme Court listed for July 16 a government petition to transfer the cases challenging the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, from various High Courts to itself.
2. The court tagged the plea to a pending special leave petition titled ‘Justice for Rights Foundation versus Union of India’.
3. The ‘Justice for Rights Foundation’ case, pending before the Justice Chandrachud-led Bench, primarily concerns the regulation of content shown on the over-the-top (OTT) platforms. The Bench has been examining the issue in the backdrop of the new IT Rules.
4. The government has said in the top court that the IT Rules provide a “comprehensive” mechanism to check the content on OTT platforms.



5. The current transfer petition deals primarily with cases in High Courts challenging the regulatory framework for social media intermediaries in the Rules. One of them is being heard in the Delhi High Court and concerns Twitter.
6. Recently, the government informed the court that Twitter has failed to comply with the law regulating tech companies rendering their services as 'intermediaries'.
7. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in an affidavit filed before the court, stated that despite three months granted to all Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs) to comply with the Rules, Twitter failed to fully comply with the same.

Judges should not act like emperors, says SC

The Supreme Court said that judges should not behave like "emperors" and summon government officials "at the drop of a hat".

Highlights:

1. The apex court said there would be a "reaction" if judges cross the line of separation of powers between the judiciary and the executive to call officers to court "unnecessarily". The apex court prescribed modesty and humility.
2. A practice has developed in certain High Courts to call officers at the drop of a hat and to exert direct or indirect pressure. The line of separation of powers between judiciary and executive is sought to be crossed by summoning the officers and, in a way, pressurising them to pass an order as per the whims and fancies of the court," the apex court observed in a judgment.
3. The actions or decisions by the officers are not to benefit them, but as a custodian of public funds and in the interest of administration, some decisions are bound to be taken. It is always open to the High Court to set aside the decision which does not meet the test of judicial review, but summoning of officers frequently is not appreciable at all.
4. Judges must know their limits. The dignity and majesty of the court were not enhanced when an officer was called to court. Respect to the court had to be commanded and not demanded and the same was not enhanced by calling public officers.



5. At times, officials had to travel great distances and wait for hours in court. His official work was delayed, creating an extra burden on the officer
6. Summoning of the officer is against the public interest. Courts have the power of the pen, which is more effective than the presence of an officer in Court.
7. If any particular issue arises for consideration before the Court, and the advocate representing the State is not able to answer, it is advised to write such doubt in the order and give time to the State or its officers to respond.

Himalayan yaks to be insured

National Research Centre on Yak terms it a landmark move.

Highlights:

1. The high-altitude yak, feeling the climate change heat across the Himalayan belt, will now be insured.
2. The National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) at Dirang in West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh, has tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. for insuring their livestock.
3. The countrywide population trend shows that the yak population has been decreasing at an alarming rate. Further, climate change and inexplicable changes in the weather pattern have been reported from the yak rearing areas throughout the country.
4. The insurance policy would shield the yak owners against the risks posed by weather calamities, diseases, in-transit mishaps, surgical operations and strikes or riots.
5. A four-year-old report said the number of yaks across the country declined by almost 24.7% between 2012 and 2019.
6. The total yak population in India is about 58,000. The Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir have some 26,000, followed by 24,000 in Arunachal Pradesh, 5,000 in Sikkim, 2,000 in Himachal Pradesh and about 1,000 in West Bengal and Uttarakhand.
7. It is a landmark development in providing financial security to yak rearing communities in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.