



Current Affairs of the Day

GS Paper II

- SC to study courts' role in policy during crises

GS Paper III

- India largest source of govt. info requests say Twitter
- ₹9,800 crore support for livestock development
- The area under sugarcane cultivation rises a tad



SC to study courts' role in policy during crises

The Supreme Court said it would examine how far courts could intervene in State policy during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic “when collective effort” was required to overcome odds.

Courts During Crisis:

1. Justice Maheshwari said these were times for a “collective effort”. “There are certain norms based on which every institution should function,” he noted.
2. The top court was hearing a plea by the Uttar Pradesh government against an Allahabad High Court order which described the medical system in smaller cities and villages of the State during the pandemic as “Ram Bharose”.
3. The High Court had issued a slew of directions to the government, which included ensuring that nursing homes in the State had oxygen facility for every bed; ensuring availability of ventilators, high-flow nasal cannula facility and beds with bipap machines in every nursing home/hospital and making sure that every nursing home/ hospital that has more than 30 beds compulsorily have an oxygen production plant; and medical colleges in Prayagraj, Agra, Meerut, Kanpur and Gorakhpur provided enhanced facilities as the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute did within four months.

Ambulance service

1. The High Court ordered the State to provide within a month at least 20 ambulances in small towns and have at least two ambulances with ICU facilities in every village.
2. It said these arrangements would help “patients from smaller towns and villages to be brought to bigger hospitals in bigger towns” for medical treatment.
3. The State government, in the top court, complained that these directions were impossible to comply with.
4. The government said the High court order had encroached into the “arena of governance” and breached the principle of separation of powers.



India largest source of govt. info requests say Twitter

It accounts for 25% of global volume: transparency report

Highlights:

1. Of the 14,561 information requests Twitter received, 3,615 were from India.
2. India is the single largest source of government information requests during the second half of 2020, accounting for 25% of the global volume, as per the biannual Twitter Transparency Report.
3. Globally, Twitter received 14,561 such requests for 51,584 accounts in the six-month period from June to December 2020, of which 3,615 requests for 7,762 accounts were from India. For India, this is an increase of about 38% from the first half of the year when the number of such requests stood at 2,613.
4. It added that global governments and law enforcement agencies submitted approximately 15% more information requests compared to the previous reporting period.
5. For the June-December period, the compliance rate for government information requests was 30% globally and 0.6% in India. The second highest volume of information requests originated from the United States, comprising 22% of global information requests.
6. During the period, Twitter received a total of 38,524 legal demands to remove content specifying 1,31,933 accounts. The platform withheld or otherwise removed some or all of the reported content in response to 29% of these global legal demands.
7. For India, the number of legal requests stood at 6,971, up 151% from 2,772 such requests in the first six months of 2020. As a result of legal requests, Twitter withheld 60 accounts and 598 tweets. In addition, 1,310 accounts were either suspended or some content was removed.

₹9,800 crore support for livestock development

1. The Central government will spend ₹9,800 crores on livestock development over the next five years in a bid to leverage almost ₹55,000 crores of outside investment into the sector, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) decided.



2. It would do this by merging a slew of schemes into three main programmes, focused on indigenous cows and dairy development, livestock health, and infrastructure development, an official statement said
3. The CCEA approved the implementation of the special livestock sector package by revising and realigning the various components of the existing schemes in order to boost growth and make animal husbandry more remunerative for the 10 crore farmers engaged in it, said the statement.
4. The commitment of ₹9,800 crores over the next five years is expected to leverage an investment of ₹54,618 crores, including spending by State governments and cooperatives, financial institutions and external funding agencies. All schemes of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying will be merged into three broad categories.

The area under sugarcane cultivation rises a tad

1. The area under sugarcane is expected to be almost 54.55 lakh hectares in 2021-2022 sugar season (October to September) or 3% higher than the current season's area, according to the Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA).
2. Uttar Pradesh is estimated to have a sugarcane area of 23.12 lakh hectares against 23.07 lakh hectares in the 2020-2021 season. Maharashtra's cane area has risen by about 11% to 12.75 lakh hectares. The area in Karnataka is 5.22 lakh hectares against 5.01 lakh hectares.
3. Sugar production so far during the current sugar season, which ends in September, is 307 lakh tonne.
4. After accounting for a reduction in sugar production on account of diversion of cane juice and B-molasses to ethanol, ISMA estimates production in the 2021-2022 season at about 310 lakh tonne.