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# **NEWSLETTER**

**Stay updated on socio-legal issues**

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX DECLARED GOA AND KERALA AS BEST GOVERNED STATES**



Image Source: The News Minute

The Public Affairs Index, 2020 was released by Public Affairs Centre, a non-profit organisation. According to the index, Kerala was the best governed the state. The report was released by the committee headed by a former Indian Space Research Organisation chairman Kasturirangan. According to the report, the states were ranked in the context of sustainable development. The Governance of the states was analysed based on three pillars namely growth, equity and sustainability. Kerala was awarded with the top most ranking and Uttar Pradesh with the bottom most ranking.

In large state category, Kerala topped the listing with an index of 1.388 followed by Tamil Nadu with 0.91, Andhra Pradesh with 0.531 and Karnataka with 0.468. The bottom most ranking was occupied by Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Bihar in the same category. In the small state category Goa topped the list followed by Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh. The bottom most states in this category were Manipur, Delhi and Uttarakhand.

## **MALABAR EXERCISE TO BE HELD IN BAY OF BENGAL**



Image Source: India Today

The navies of India, Japan, US and Australia are to participate in the Malabar Exercise to be held in the Bay of Bengal between 3rd and 6th November. The exercise will include complex and advanced naval exercises. During the exercise, the countries will conduct anti-warfare and anti-submarine operations, seamanship evolution, cross-deck flying and weapon firing exercise. During the exercise, the Indian Navy is to deploy a number of key platforms. This includes off-shore patrol vessel Sukanya, frigate Shivalik, fleet support ship Shakti and submarine Sindhuraj. Also, the Dornier maritime patrol aircraft, long range maritime patrol aircraft P-81 and the advance jet trainer Hawk are to be deployed. There is a second phase of the exercise planned for 17-20 November. The annual exercise began in 1992 between India and US navies in the Indian Ocean. Later in 2015, Japan became the permanent member of the exercise. In 2019, the exercise was held in Japan and in 2018, in the Philippine Sea.

## **IIT MADRAS LAUNCHES GAME TO RAISE AWARENESS ON COVID-19**

The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras has developed “IITM COVID Game” to create awareness about the COVID-19 virus among children. This game was launched by Union Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan. The game is developed on browser-based software and can be

played on any device. It is available in 12 different Indian languages such as Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Oriya, Marathi, Malayalam, Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Assamese and Punjabi. The game which has taken inspiration from the all-time favourite video game Super Mario features a character who encounters right things such as washing hands, wearing masks and also encounter things to be avoided such as hugs and handshakes. If the character does the right thing the points get added up. This initiative is aimed at inculcating a healthy and hygienic lifestyle in children amid this pandemic.

### **SEAPLANE SERVICE LAUNCHED BETWEEN STATUE OF UNITY AND AHMEDABAD**



Image Source: Swarajyamag

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the seaplane service between Statue of Unity in Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad. The PM inaugurated the service on the occasion of Ekta Diwas celebrated every year on 31st October in memory of India's first Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The Seaplane reduces the travel time from 4-5 hours to 45 minutes. Low cost carrier SpiceJet will operate the 19 seater twin-prop Otter aircraft under its subsidiary Spice Shuttle. The flight is expected to cost around Rs. 4800 for a round trip and will offer passengers breathtaking views of the Statue of Unity and the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

**30 INDIAN CITIES TO FACE WATER RISK ACCORDING TO WORLD WIDE FUND**  
**WATER RISK REPORT**

The World Wide Fund Water Risk Filter Report says that nearly 30 Indian cities are likely to face acute water risks. This includes Jaipur, Amritsar, Indore, Srinagar, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam and Kozhikode. Of these cities Jaipur topped the list. It was followed by Indore, Thane, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi. The report defines “water risk” as battling between flooding and droughts.

The report estimates that hundreds of millions of people all over the world will face increased water risks. The number of cities affected with water risks will increase to 100 by 2050. The list includes Jakarta, Beijing, Johannesburg, Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro and Mecca. More than half of the cities to face the water risks are located in China. The other hotspots include Middle East, South Asia, Africa and South America. These cities are home to 350 million people. Of all the countries, the number of vulnerable cities in India is the highest. According to the report, the Smart City initiative can aid India in framing an integrated water management network. Also, the report suggests that the multi stakeholder ownership and engagement involving local communities will play a key role in conserving sustainable water infrastructure. It will also help in rejuvenating urban freshwater systems. According to the report, to save the cities from the water risks, it is important to restore the wetlands. This will help the cities to come out of the vicious loop of water scarcity and flooding.

**GOVERNMENT FORMS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW TELEVISION RATING**  
**SYSTEM**

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is to set up a committee to review the existing guidelines of Television Rating Agencies. The committee has been formed with four members under the chairmanship of CEO of Prasar Bharti Sashi Shekar Vempati. The other three members of the committee include Rajkumar Upadhyaya (Executive Director of C-Dot), Dr Shalabh, Professor of Statistics from IIT Kanpur and Professor Pulak Ghosh of Decision Sciences Centre for Public Policy. The Government of India recently released the TRP Guidelines after a detailed

analysis of parliamentary committee. These guidelines were based on the recommendations made by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. The guidelines aim to strengthen the procedures for transparent rating system and make technological advancements. This comes in light of the TRP scam unearthed by the Mumbai Police last month.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### JOE BIDEN BECOMES 46<sup>TH</sup> US PRESIDENT



Image Source: Texomas Homepage

Joe Biden won the election and became 46<sup>th</sup> President of the USA by securing 290 electoral votes whereas Trump could only get 214 electoral votes. Joe Biden from the Democratic Party and Donald Trump from the Republican Party were the candidates in the US elections 2020. The win in Pennsylvania helped Biden in this lead which was further secured based on the results in Nevada which had 6 electoral votes.

The election in USA is done according to the Electoral College. The Electoral College of the United States refers to a group of presidential electors which is required by the American Constitution. It is to be formed in every 4 years in order to elect the President and Vice-President. An absolute majority of 270 electoral votes and the Electoral College is required to elect the President and the Vice-President.

The US election of 2020 has been in light, since 1992 it would be the first time that a US president will lose the re-election. Donald Trump has alleged that this election is not fair. He has alleged of ballot dump and made a statement that on counting of legal votes, he has easily won. The Trump's campaign has also visited the courts in states in order request re-counting of votes. They also approached the Supreme Court but their request was decline. The SC declined to intervene but it could step in when required.

### **SNOWDEN AIMS TO BE DUAL US-RUSSIAN CITIZEN**



Image Source: Economic Times

Edward Joseph Snowden, a fugitive US whistleblower, has applied for Russian citizenship but would keep his US nationality. This happened after recently Moscow allowed individuals to hold Russian passports without rejecting their nationality. Snowden is a former Central Intelligence Agency employee and contractor. In 2013, Snowden copies and leaked some classified information from the national security agency. It was revealed that the US Government was

spying on its citizens and collecting telephone records of the citizens. Snowden took asylum in Russia. Russia has also provided permanent residency rights to Snowden. He is wanted in US on the espionage charges after he leaked the information about the US government.

### **GILGIT-BALTISTAN TO BE A FULL PROVINCE**

Pakistan's Prime Minister has announced that Gilgit – Baltistan will provisionally become the full province of Pakistan. It will be the fifth province in Pakistan when finalised. Gilgit-Baltistan is a region which is administered by Pakistan as an autonomous administrative territory. It constitutes northern portion of Kashmir region, the subject of dispute between India and Pakistan. He reasoned the decision by stating that china's infrastructure projects in several years has provided home to 1.3 million people. He stated that well-maintained roads, under China-Pakistan economic corridor would help in the upliftment of poor areas and poor segments of society

India condemned the announcement and stated that it would bring material changes to a part of Indian Territory. The foreign ministry spokesperson stated that the decision of Gilgit-Baltistan to be a province is an intended camouflage it's illegal occupation, the human rights violations acts and exploitation of freedom of the people residing in Pakistan for decades.

### **USA EXITS PARIS PACT**

The United States of America formally exits the Paris Pact. The Paris agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted in 2015. It aims to avert the threat of catastrophic climate change and keep the increase in the average temperatures worldwide below 2 degrees Celsius. Around 189 countries are committed to this accord and 6 more countries have signed but not ratified it. China and USA are the biggest emitters of heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide. These nations are expected to contribute in cutting emissions. But USA in 2017 announced that it would withdraw from the accords as it undermines the US economy and puts it at permanent disadvantage. There were negotiations, re-enter agreement but USA has recently formally left the accord and isolated itself in a manner.



## FIRST INDIAN MINISTER APPOINTED IN NEW ZEALAND



Image Source: Jagran Josh

Priyanca Radhakrishnan is the first Chennai-born Indian-origin minister in executive. Jacinda Arden introduced five new ministers in the executive of New Zealand. She has been appointed as the Minister for the Community and Voluntary sector and associate minister for social development and employment. Ms. Radhakrishnan has spent her work-life advocating on behalf of women survivors of domestic violence and migrant workers. Prime Minister Arden stated that the new appointments are the incorporation of new talents in the executive.

## LEGAL NEWS

### **SCHEMES AND INITIATIVE FOR SCHEDULE CASTE AND TRIBE INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL**

Chief Minister of West Bengal, Ms. Mamata Banerjee on November, 4 2020 announced many initiatives for Schedule Caste and Tribe along with the refugee population in WB spread across the state. The scheme proposes to provide around 25,000 land pattas to the refugees with Rs. 10 Crores being allocated under the newly announced Matua Development Board for Dalit refugees from Bangladesh. The schemes also propose the creation of cultural boards in Bauri (Dhule), Majhis and Bagdis which are Dalit communities in order to preserve their heritage. Swastiya Sathi Scheme was introduced in 2016 and has benefited around 50 Lakh families with a health insurance of up to 1.5 lakh per annum.

### **NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT RESOLUTIONS SUGGESTED BY INDIA ADOPTED BY THE UN**



Image Source: Affairs Cloud

“Convention on Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons” and “Reducing Nuclear Danger” which were sponsored to United Nations by India have been adopted on November 3 2020. The Convention on Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons was tabled by India 1982 which

requested the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to initiate negotiation to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances was also backed by majority vote by the members of United Nations. With the Reducing Nuclear Danger drawing global attention of accidental use of nuclear weapons, it is successful in bringing to light the need to review nuclear doctrines. Being tabled in 1998, it draws attention to the formulation of steps for the reduction of the risk and de-targeting the use of nuclear weapons. However, the challenges in front of the implementation of the same are the implementation are the conflicts between US and China along with the growing divergence with European partners.

### **100% MOTOR VEHICLE TAX EXEMPTIONS TO EVS**



Image Source: Business-Standard

Tamil Nadu state government has recently announced that it would grant 100% motor vehicle tax exemptions to electric vehicles. These orders come after the state had earlier proposed to give 50% concession in the tax to electric vehicles which has now been scaled up to 100% exemption to both transport and non-transport vehicles. The government also aims to attract investments by providing 100% GST reimbursement and 50% capital subsidy to manufacturing units of electric vehicles with a plan to set up electric vehicle park spread over 300 acres of land. The scheme

also aims to open about 150,000 employment options in the state with the opening of the one of its kind parks in the country. The state accounts to about 35% of the country's auto component production with 4.82 million two- wheelers and 1.71 million passenger vehicles being produced. In 2019, the Tamil Nadu Government announced the EV Policy. Under the policy, the State Government had planned to provide subsidies to both supply side and demand side to promote Electric Vehicles. The policy also covers electric motors, cell manufacturing, EV power trains and battery management. The Government of India has also launched the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan, 2020 to improve fuel security through promotion of electric and hybrid vehicles in the country.

### **MADHYA PRADESH HIGH COURT: “ONLY TUITION FEES” SHOULD BE RECOVERED BY SCHOOL FROM STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

The Jabalpur Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on November 5 2020 gave a verdict proving to be a relief for the parents and the school staff under which the school can only recover tuition fee from the students during the pandemic era. The Bench also ordered that the teaching and non-teaching staff shall be getting their regular pay on the due time of payment. The petition resulted as a dissatisfaction from the notification issued by the Central Board of Secondary Education and the School Education Department, State of Madhya Pradesh's notification regarding the payment of fee by the parents in private and connected unaided schools during the lockdown period due to Covid-19. The education department of Madhya Pradesh subsequently issued circulars and notifications to the school administration to make timely payment of salary to the staff as per the instructions issued by the Court failing which the affiliation of the school shall be subject to cancellation. The situation arouses since the pandemic disabled parents from the payment of school fee which became led to a challenging situation for the schools who faced increasing expenditures and a reduced income. In light of the same they made a decision to withhold the payment of salary to the staff engaged in transport, mess and other supporting staff. The key points highlighted in the judgement are:

- The unaided private institution shall ensure that the students of all ranks are not deprived of the quality education/learning by adopting digital/online education platform evolved by the

Government of India under caption "Pragyata" (Guidelines for Digital Education, MHRD dated 14.07.2020) by adopting synchronous or asynchronous method of online learning and teaching.

- When the Government declares that the Pandemic is over and the Schools return to normal physical functions, the District Committee shall within thirty days from such declaration take decision as to increment of fees for the remaining period of academic session 2020-21 as per the stipulation contained in sub-section (2) of Section 5 of the Adhiniyam, 2017.
- Salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff shall be regularly paid on the due date.

**BAN ON THE BURNING AND SALE OF FIRECRACKERS DURING DIWALI, CHHAT PUJA, KALI PUJA IMPOSED IN CALCUTTA**



Image Source: Siliguri Times

The High Court of Calcutta has imposed a ban on the sale and burning of firecrackers throughout the State due to the current situation of Covid-19. With Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Arijit Banerjee order that, “The State should ensure that there is no use or display or bursting of firecrackers at all during the Kali Puja and Diwali celebrations” some relaxations

have been given to the use of wax or oil based diyas which would be in the national interest. The Court appreciated the endeavour of the government to protect the air quality and the efforts taken to keep infection at bay owing to the noxious fumes that are released from the crackers. Appreciation of the effort of the police was also made by the Court. The police have been asked to be vigilant towards the sale and use of fireworks in any part of the state and is directed to take immediate actions against those violating the Order. The court ordered that all pandals will continue to be No-Entry Zones, including an area of five-metre beyond the pandals on all the open sides. For the smaller pandals, where the covered area excluding the dais is up to 150 square metres, only 10 persons may be in such covered area at any given point of time. Sanitisers must be available at the puja pandals and wearing of masks will be mandatory within and around the pandal area.

### **DECISION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KERALA TO IMPLEMENT ECONOMIC WEAKER SECTIONS (EWS) IN GOVERNMENT JOBS CHALLENGED**

The order of the Pinarayi Vijayan led government to provide 10% reservation of seats in general category for EWS category for jobs and seats in educational institutions was challenged before the High Court of Kerala as a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) by a social worker and an active politician and the secretary of Fraternity Movement Kerala State Committee. It was contended that Article 15(6) and 16(6) which provides for reservation for EWS inserted by the 103<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment was invalid a reservation cannot be made on the grounds of economic growth. “Even though the Constitution promotes reservation on the ground of economic backwardness, it does not promote reservation on the ground of economic backwardness.” Therefore, the reservation along with the amendment are bad in the eyes of law. The petition also sought a directive to the State Government to re-fix the 10% quota for economically weaker sections after conducting a proper study regarding the population of the EWS in the general category. The matter has been referred to a larger Bench led by the Chief Justice of India.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER: INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

The date of November 2nd was chosen to mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against journalists to commemorate the assassination of French journalists in Mali in 2013. More than 1,200 journalists were killed between 2006 and 2019. The recent assassination of Journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018 kindled worldwide criticism and scrutiny of the Saudi Government. This year's theme is, "Protect Journalists, Protect the Truth".

World Press Freedom Index, 2020 India dropped to 142 out of 180 countries in World Press Freedom Index, 2020. Norway ranked first.

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