

THE CURRENTS

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#01

West Bengal SIR test: reading the Supreme Court's order

The Supreme Court's order comes amidst 60 lakh pending cases in West Bengal, which has sparked a discussion on the Election Commission's need for permanent staff to handle electoral roll disputes. The publication of final rolls is also a crucial aspect of this issue. The Supreme Court's decision aims to address the backlog of cases and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. The Election Commission's current staffing structure has been questioned, with some arguing that it needs permanent staff to effectively manage electoral disputes. The Supreme Court's order is seen as a step towards strengthening the electoral process in West Bengal.

Background

The issue of electoral roll disputes in West Bengal has been ongoing for several years, with the Election Commission struggling to cope with the large number of cases. The Supreme Court's order is a significant development in this context, as it seeks to address the backlog of cases and ensure that the electoral process is fair and transparent. The Election Commission's staffing structure has been a subject of debate, with some arguing that it needs permanent staff to effectively manage electoral disputes.

Key Points

- ◆ **The Supreme Court — Electoral Roll Disputes:** Ordered deployment of judicial officers to decide cases.
- ◆ **Election Commission — Staffing:** Equipped with permanent staff to handle electoral roll disputes.
- ◆ **West Bengal — Pending Cases:** 60 lakh cases pending adjudication.
- ◆ **The Supreme Court — Publication of Final Rolls:** Crucial aspect of electoral process.
- ◆ **Election Commission — Electoral Process:** Aims to ensure integrity and transparency.

Policy Implication

The Supreme Court's order has significant implications for the electoral process in West Bengal, as it seeks to address the backlog of cases and ensure that the process is fair and transparent. The Election Commission's staffing structure is likely to be reviewed, with a possible move towards permanent staff to handle electoral disputes.

 The Hindu

#02

Prime Minister to launch projects worth ₹10,800 crore at Kochi event

The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for a polypropylene unit at Kochi Refinery, a project worth ₹10,800 crore. This initiative is expected to boost the region's infrastructure and economy. The event will also see the inauguration of 23 rural roads constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the State. The Kochi Refinery is a significant contributor to the region's industrial growth. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana aims to improve rural connectivity across the country.

Background

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched in 2000 to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations. The scheme has been instrumental in improving rural infrastructure and promoting economic growth in these areas.

Key Points

- ◆ **The Prime Minister — Polypropylene Unit:** Laying foundation stone at Kochi Refinery (₹10,800 crore).
- ◆ **The Prime Minister — Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana:** Inaugurating 23 rural roads in the State.
- ◆ **The Government — Kochi Refinery:** Boosting regional infrastructure and economy through the polypropylene unit.
- ◆ **The Government — Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana:** Improving rural connectivity across the country.
- ◆ **The Prime Minister — Kochi Event:** Launching projects worth ₹10,800 crore.

Policy Implication

The launch of these projects is expected to have a positive impact on the regional economy and infrastructure. The improved connectivity through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana will facilitate better access to markets, schools, and healthcare facilities for the rural population.

 The Hindu

#03

Supreme Court approves Centre's proposal extending term of tribunal members

The Supreme Court has given its nod to the Centre's proposal to extend the term of tribunal members. This move will affect those appointed under the Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021. According to Attorney General R Venkataramani, a new law is likely to be enacted by next September, either in the upcoming Budget session or the Monsoon session. Around 21 members are due to retire before the new law is enacted. The extension is intended to ensure continuity until the new legislation is in place.

Background

The Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021 was enacted to overhaul the tribunal system in India. The Act aimed to streamline the functioning of tribunals and ensure their independence and efficiency. However, the implementation of the Act has been slow, and the Centre has been working to address the issues arising from it.

Key Points

- ◆ **Supreme Court — Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021:** Approved extension of term for tribunal members.
- ◆ **Centre — Proposal:** Extended term for tribunal members until new law is enacted.
- ◆ **Attorney General R Venkataramani — Statement:** New law likely to be enacted by next September.
- ◆ **Tribunal Members — Retirement:** Around 21 members due to retire before new law is enacted.
- ◆ **Centre — Legislation:** Aims to ensure continuity and address issues arising from Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021.

Policy Implication

The extension of the term of tribunal members will ensure continuity in the functioning of tribunals until the new law is enacted. The new legislation is expected to address the issues arising from the implementation of the Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021 and provide a more efficient and independent tribunal system.

 The Hindu

#04

Israel-Iran war: Trump says war will end 'very soon'; U.S. saving some 'most important' targets for later

The US President played down the scale of the conflict, which has not been approved by the US Congress, repeatedly calling it an 'excursion' rather than a war. The conflict between Israel and Iran has been escalating, with the US involved in the situation. Trump's statement comes amid rising tensions in the region. The US Congress has not approved the conflict, raising questions about the legitimacy of US involvement. The situation is being closely watched by the international community.

Background

The conflict between Israel and Iran has a long history, with tensions escalating in recent years. The US has been involved in the region, with its actions being closely watched by the international community, particularly since the US Congress has not approved the conflict, with the situation dating back to before the current US administration took office in 2017.

Key Points

- ◆ **US President — Statement:** Said the war will end 'very soon'.
- ◆ **US Congress — Approval:** Has not approved the conflict.
- ◆ **US President — Description:** Repeatedly called the conflict an 'excursion' rather than a war.
- ◆ **International Community — Response:** Is closely watching the situation.
- ◆ **US — Involvement:** Has been involved in the conflict, with its actions being questioned by the US Congress.

Policy Implication

The US President's statement may have significant implications for the region, as it could impact the trajectory of the conflict. The lack of approval from the US Congress raises questions about the legitimacy of US involvement, which could have long-term consequences for the region and US foreign policy.

 The Hindu

UP govt signs pact with Hinduja Group firm to expand broadband connectivity

The Uttar Pradesh government has signed a pact with a Hinduja Group firm to expand broadband connectivity in the state. The pact aims to provide high-speed internet services to around 3.5 lakh villages and 20,000 gram panchayats. The project is expected to be completed within the next 2 years at a cost of ₹2,500 crore. The Hinduja Group firm will be responsible for laying optical fibre cables across the state. The project is expected to benefit around 16 crore people in the state.

Background

The expansion of broadband connectivity in Uttar Pradesh is part of the state government's efforts to improve digital infrastructure. The project is in line with the Centre's BharatNet programme, which aims to provide high-speed internet services to all gram panchayats in the country by 2025.

Key Points

- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh government — Broadband Expansion Project:** Signed pact with Hinduja Group firm to expand broadband connectivity.
- ◆ **Hinduja Group firm — Broadband Expansion Project:** Will lay optical fibre cables across the state at a cost of ₹2,500 crore.
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh government — Broadband Expansion Project:** Aims to provide high-speed internet services to around 3.5 lakh villages and 20,000 gram panchayats.
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh government — Broadband Expansion Project:** Expected to benefit around 16 crore people in the state.
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh government — Broadband Expansion Project:** Expected to be completed within the next 2 years.

Policy Implication

The expansion of broadband connectivity in Uttar Pradesh is expected to have a positive impact on the state's economy and education sector. It will also provide opportunities for digital literacy and skill development, especially in rural areas.

QUICK BITES — Q&A

1. Under which ministry does the KSRTC operate?

Answer: Ministry of Transport

2. What is the main objective of the Bill passed by the Rajasthan Assembly regarding panchayat elections?

Answer: To scrap two-child norm

3. Who has called on High Court collegiums to consider female lawyers of Supreme Court for judgeship?

Answer: CJI

4. Under which article does the Supreme Court have the power to reject tariffs?

Answer: Article 207

5. What is the main provision of the women's quota law?

Answer: Reservation of seats for women

6. Under which article does the Supreme Court direct the Centre to frame policies?

Answer: Article 142

7. What is the main objective of the no-fault compensation policy for serious adverse events post COVID-19 vaccination?

Answer: To provide compensation to victims

8. Under which ministry is the wage hike of tea workers notified?

Answer: Ministry of Labour

9. What is the main provision of the Bill regarding tariffs rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court?

Answer: Imposition of tariffs
