

Prasar Bharati rejects Ministry's directives

Aggressively defending its autonomy, public broadcaster Prasar Bharati has rejected a range of “directives” coming from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

It said that the directives constituted “contempt” of the Prasar Bharati Act.

A directive from the ministry ordered Prasara Bharati to terminate the services of all contractual employees of Prasar Bharati.

A sizeable number of employees, both in Doordarshan and All India Radio, work on contract and sacking them without arranging for an alternative would lead to the collapse of both organisations, Prasar Bharati said.

The Ministry's proposal to hire two senior journalists, Siddharth Zarabi and Abhijit Majumdar, was withdrawn as the board was not in favour of hiring media persons on exorbitant compensation packages.

‘Violation of provisions’

Another agenda item withdrawn during the board meeting was the appointment of a serving IAS officer as Member (Personnel) on the Prasar Bharati Board.

Under the rules, a committee led by the Vice-President has to recommend the person to be appointed as Member (Personnel) and Member (Finance), who have to be whole-time members and employees of Prasar Bharati.

DD Free Dish

The board also objected to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's direction to stop all e-auction of channels on DD Free Dish.

The directive will “wreck the finances of Prasar Bharati” and the Corporation stands to lose ₹300 crore.

The Ministry also wants general entertainment channels to be replaced by channels run by Union Ministries.

Arvind Jamkhedkar to head ICHR

Archaeologist and historian Arvind P. Jamkhedkar will be the next Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).

He will replace Prof. K. Sudershan Rao, who is set retire soon.

Prof. Jamkhedkar is at present Chancellor of Deccan College, Pune, known in academic circles for its archaeology department.

WHO issues new guidelines to curb surge in C-sections

The World Health Organization (WHO) has revised a benchmark used by health professionals worldwide in caring for women during childbirth.

This is because it has caused a surge in interventions like Caesarean sections that could be unnecessary.

Since the 1950s, a woman progressing through labour at a rate slower than one centimetre of cervical dilation per hour has been considered “abnormal”.

When doctors confront with this, “the tendency is to act”, either with a Caesarean section or with the use of drugs like oxytocin that speed up labour, leading to the “increased medicalisation” of childbirth.

In its new guidelines, the WHO called for the elimination of the one centimetre per hour benchmark.

Recent research has show that that line does not apply to all women and every birth is unique.

Worldwide trend

The recommendation is that that line should not be used to identify women at risk of adverse outcome.

While rates of interventions like C-sections vary among regions, WHO has seen what it considers a worrying rise in such practices worldwide.

The new WHO guidelines say that for a woman delivering her first child, any labour that does not extend beyond 12 hours should be considered normal. For a subsequent pregnancy, the figure drops to less than 10 hours.

Zuma quits, Ramaphosa is elected President

Cyril Ramaphosa was elected South Africa's President by the ruling party legislators after the resignation of Jacob Zuma.

Zuma's scandals brought the storied African National Congress (ANC) to its weakest point since taking power at the end of apartheid.

Mr. Ramaphosa was the only candidate nominated for election after two Opposition parties said they would not participate.

The ANC had instructed Mr. Zuma this week to step down or face a parliamentary motion of no-confidence that he would almost certainly lose.

Mr. Zuma denies any wrongdoing.

Oli sworn in as Nepal PM for second time

K.P. Sharma Oli was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the second time, weeks after his Left alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) swept the parliamentary polls.

The CPN-UML secured 121 seats in the 275-member Parliament and became the largest party.

The Nepali Congress won 63 seats while the CPN-Maoist secured 53 seats.

STATE – AP

States to file affidavits on dispute

The Supreme Court directed the Centre and six interested States to make statements in the form of affidavits, swearing under the oath that they are bound by the 1980 award of Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal.

The award adjudicated the river water utilisation disputes among the basin States of Godavari and Krishna.

Odisha, A.P., Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Karnataka have to file their affidavits within the next four weeks.

The court passed the order while hearing a matter related to the Indira Sagar Polavaram Project on the Godavari in Andhra Pradesh.

The court did not rule out a proposal for an out-of-court meetings among the Chief Ministers of the six States to sort out the differences on the project and related issues.