

HC restrains Karnataka from taking action against editors

The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday directed the State government, or any of the authorities acting under it, not to carry out any adverse action against the editors of two tabloids, who by a resolution passed by the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, were sentenced to one-year imprisonment for breaching the privilege of the legislators.

- The court passed the interim order after a preliminary hearing on the petitions filed by Ravi Belagere, editor of Hi Bangalore and Anil Raj, editor and publisher of Yelahanka Voice.
- The court granted four weeks for the petitioners and respondents and the State government to complete submission of relevant documents and pleading.
- The petitioners had questioned the constitutional validity of the resolution passed by the Assembly in June 2017, sentencing them to imprisonment based on two separate reports of the CoP, which had found the petitioner-editors guilty of breaching privileges for publishing “defamatory and false” articles against the three legislators in the two tabloids.

The Assembly, in Nov2017, reiterated its resolution of June 21 after the High Court, in connection with earlier petitions filed by the editors against the June resolution, had allowed them to submit a representation to the Assembly through the Speaker for reconsideration of the earlier resolution.

The petitioners had argued that neither the CoP nor the Assembly had jurisdiction to either proceed against them or sentence them to imprisonment when the articles published in their tabloids had nothing to do with proceedings of the Assembly or rights of legislators within the Assembly.

Solar Alliance comes into existence

India’s global initiative, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) that aims at increasing solar energy deployment in member countries, came into legal, independent existence on 6th Dec. It is the first treaty-based international intergovernmental organisation to be based out of India.

- So far, 19 countries are part of the compact — Bangladesh, Comoros, Fiji, France, Ghana, Guinea, India, Mali, Mauritius, Nauru, Niger, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tuvalu, Australia, Cuba, Malawi and Peru.
- The ISA, also sees itself as on a mission to mobilise more than \$1000 billion in investments needed by 2030 for “massive deployment” of solar energy, pave the way for future technologies adapted to the needs of moving to a fossil-free future and keep global temperatures from rising above 2C by the end of the century.
- India has committed itself to having 175,000 MW of renewed energy in the grid by 2022.

As part of the agreement, India will contribute \$27 million (Rs 175.5 crore approx) to the ISA for creating corpus, building infrastructure and recurring expenditure over five years from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

- In addition, public sector undertakings of the Government of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), have made a contribution of \$1 million (Rs 6.5 crore) each for creating the ISA corpus fund.

The ISA is an Indian initiative, jointly launched by PM Narendra Modi and the president of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, on the sidelines of COP-21, the UN climate conference.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Jerusalem is Israel's capital: U.S.

Background

- In 1947, the United Nations devised a plan to divide British mandate Palestine into three entities: a Jewish state, an Arab state and Jerusalem, which would have a unique status as an internationally controlled city.
- Jewish leaders accepted the plan, but the Arab world rejected it.
- Following the British withdrawal the next year, a war broke out in which Israel seized the west of the city, while Jordanians and Palestinians took the east.
- In the next conflict in 1967 Israel seized control of east Jerusalem and later annexed it, in moves never recognised by the international community.

- The predominantly Palestinian population in the east lives under full Israeli control, but cannot vote in parliamentary elections.

Israeli, Palestinian views

- Israel views the city as its undivided capital, with a December 5, 2017 statement saying the city “is the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years and Israel’s capital since 70 years”.
- The internationally recognised Palestinian government sees the eastern part as the capital of their future state.

Islamist movement Hamas, which controls Gaza and does not recognise Israel, calls Jerusalem the Palestinian capital.

U.S. and the Jerusalem Embassy Act

- In 1995, the U.S. Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act calling on the United States to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, recognising it as Israel’s capital.
- The law is binding on the U.S. government but a clause allowed Presidents to postpone its application for six months on “national security interests”.
- Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama re-ratified the clause every six months.
- Mr. Trump reluctantly renewed it for the first time in June 2017, despite promising during his campaign to move the embassy.
- On 6th Dec, U.S. President Donald Trump reversed decades of policy and recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, despite warnings from around the world that the gesture will further drive a wedge between Israel and the Palestinians.
- Mr. Trump said his administration would also begin a process of moving the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which is expected to take years.

International community’s stand

- The position of the majority of the international community has been largely unchanged for decades.
- Essentially Jerusalem is viewed as an issue for final status negotiations between the two sides. United Nations statements suggest, however, that the city could remain the capital of both Israel and a future Palestinian state in any deal.
- The vast majority of countries have largely followed this line. All embassies are based in the commercial capital Tel Aviv, but most countries simply do not specify what they consider to be Israel's capital.

Russia remains equidistant

Earlier in 2017, a Russian government statement for the first time specifically said “we view West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel”.

This appeared to be a shift in policy position and was hailed by some Israeli politicians, though it had little practical implication.

The statement also recognised “east Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian state”.

Status must be negotiated: U.N. envoy

The U.N. envoy for the Middle East peace process said on December 6 that Jerusalem's future status must be negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians.

Pope defends ‘status quo’

Pope Francis has defended the “status quo” of Jerusalem. “I appeal strongly for all to respect the city's status quo, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions,” the pope said in his weekly address on December 6.

The Palestinians have said Mr. Trump's move would mean the “kiss of death” to the two-state solution, envisaging a Palestinian state in territory – the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem – that Israel took in the 1967 war.

Hamas said the decision would “open the gates of hell” on U.S. interests in the region.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed Mr. Trump's decision as “historic” and “courageous”. Mr. Netanyahu also pledged no change

to the status quo at Jerusalem's highly sensitive holy sites in the city sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims.

A delegation led by President Mahmoud Abbas that had met Mr. Trump's son-in-law and envoy for the peace process Jared Kushner recently and had warned that the U.S. would forfeit its status as an "honest broker" if it undermined the Palestinian claims on parts of the city unilaterally.

Mr. Trump's announcement came in for condemnation from U.S.'s allies in the region and beyond. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey and European allies like Germany, France and Britain have already said the move would be counterproductive and spark unrest.

Silence breakers' earn Time honour

"The Silence Breakers" — those who have shared their stories about sexual assault and harassment have been collectively named Time magazine's Person of the Year.

- Numerous women have spoken out since October about sexual misconduct by dozens of high-profile men in entertainment, media, business and sports.
- Time praised those who have given "voice to open secrets, for moving whisper networks onto social networks, for pushing us all to stop accepting the unacceptable."

The magazine's cover features Ashley Judd, Taylor Swift and others who said they have been harassed.

- Women who spoke out, initially against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein and then others, helped to spawn the #MeToo movement, with millions of people telling stories of sexual misconduct on social media.
- The tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts began after actor-activist Alyssa Milano followed on a suggestion from a friend of a friend on Facebook and tweeted: "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet."
- The hashtag was tweeted nearly a million times in 48 hours.

#MeToo was actually founded by activist Tarana Burke a decade ago to raise awareness about sexual violence.

Selfie monkey is PETA person of the year

An Indonesian monkey who shot to fame after it snapped a grinning selfie — and sparked a landmark U.S. copyright case — was named “Person of the Year” by the animal rights group PETA that took on the simian’s cause.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) said it was honouring **Naruto**, a crested black macaque with a goofy-looking grin, to recognize that “he is someone, not something”.

In 2011, the monkey pressed the shutter button while staring down the lens of a camera set up British nature photographer David Slater on the island of Sulawesi.

The photos quickly went viral and PETA launched a lawsuit that claimed the then six-year-old Naruto should be “declared the author and owner of his photograph”.

The court case set off a debate among legal experts. It was settled in September — before a ruling could be made — with Mr. Slater agreeing to donate 25% of any future revenue from using or selling the monkey selfies to help protect the habitat of crested macaques in Indonesia.