

SC upholds passive euthanasia

The Supreme Court has upheld passive euthanasia and the right to give advance medical directives or 'Living Wills' to smoothen the dying process as part of the fundamental right to live with dignity.

Passive euthanasia is the act of withdrawing or withholding medical support to a dying patient who has no hope for revival or cure.

- The Court ruled that the fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the "right to die with dignity." Dignity is lost if a man is allowed or forced to undergo pain and suffering because of "unwarranted medical support."

The right of a dying man to die with dignity when life is ebbing out and in the case of a terminally ill patient or a person in permanent vegetative state, where there is no hope of recovery, accelerating the process of death for reducing the period of suffering constitutes a right to live with dignity, the court said.

- The court described the exact stage at which suffering robs a dying person of his dignity.
 - A state where the treating physicians and the family members know fully well that the treatment is administered only to procrastinate the continuum of breath and the patient is not even aware that he is breathing.

The court distinguished passive euthanasia from suicide and active euthanasia.

- It called passive euthanasia as a "mere acceleration of the inevitable conclusion."
- Active euthanasia, the court concluded, is unlawful.
- Suicide involves "overt acts" which culminates in an unnatural death.
- A valid 'Living Will' facilitates passive euthanasia.

Request on flag yet to reach Centre

The Home Ministry said that it was yet to receive the Karnataka government's request for a separate flag and would examine the proposal when it comes.

- There was no precedent of any State having a separate flag, barring Jammu and Kashmir, but the Constitution does not provide for or against it.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had unveiled the proposed official flag of the State and said his government would send the proposal to the Centre for approval.

- The Flag Code of India and the State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use) Act refer only to the tricolour and there is no mention of any other flag.
- Jammu and Kashmir has a separate flag because of the special status it enjoys under Article 370 of the Constitution.
- Legally there is no provision either for providing or prohibiting a separate flag for any State

A regulatory framework had to be formed to deal with such a situation so that a decision could be taken as per the law and Constitutional provisions.

Rajasthan passes Bill to give death penalty for child rape

Rajasthan became the second State, after Madhya Pradesh, to pass a Bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below. The State Assembly passed the Bill, seeking to amend the Indian Penal Code with the insertion of new provision by voice vote.

The Bill will become a law after it gets the Presidential assent.

Pak. trying to mainstream Saeed: India

India said Pakistan was mainstreaming terrorism by allowing terror mastermind Hafiz Saeed to register a political party.

This basically completely exposes Pakistan's duplicity in taking action against terrorists and terror groups that are operating out of Pakistani soil. He was the prime organiser of the Mumbai terror attacks, MEA said.

India's strong response came a day after a court in Islamabad ordered the Pakistan Election Commission to register Saeed's newly floated organisation, Milli Muslim League, as a political party.

Trump accepts Kim's talks offer

President Donald Trump will meet North Korean leader Kim Jong-un by May, opening a diplomatic path to a potential solution to the nuclear stalemate on the Korean peninsula.

- This will be the first time a sitting American President will be meeting a North Korean leader.
- Mr Kim conveyed his willingness to talks to south Korean officials , who then conveyed it to Mr Trump

Trump hails 'great progress' on Korean nuclear crisis

U.S. President Donald Trump hailed "great progress" in attempts to resolve the Korean nuclear crisis.

It was after the White House said the President accepted an invitation from North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for a face to face meeting.

Great progress being made but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached.

South Korean delegation conveyed the invitation for talks from Pyongyang to the Trump administration.

South Korean National Security Adviser told Mr. Trump that Mr. Kim was committed to denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, and no longer objected to joint military exercises by South Korea and the U.S.

North Korea will also refrain from further nuclear and missile testing.

He said the President agreed to meet Mr. Kim in May.

American war preparations have also progressed simultaneously, bringing to the forefront the huge risks associated with a pre-emptive strike on North Korea.

A significant section of American strategic thinkers have already concluded that America must learn to live with a nuclear North Korea.

North Korea's willingness to ignore the U.S-South Korean joint military exercises is a climbdown for Pyongyang, and encouraging for Washington.

China has been proposing 'freeze for freeze,' i.e discontinuation of tests by the North and exercises by the South and the U.S., as an initial step towards a diplomatic breakthrough.

Joint exercises are now due, though dates have not been announced.

China's reaction - China welcomed the decision for talks, saying the nuclear issue is moving in the right direction.

EU, U.K. seek clarity on U.S. tariffs

In News

The British government is under pressure to exercise its supposed influence in Washington and gain an exemption for Britain's steel industry from the tariffs on steel and aluminium.

It comes as the EU sought clarity on whether the exemptions accorded so far by the U.S. extended to it too.

Last week, the European Commission warned that retaliatory action in the form of tariffs on U.S. imports into Europe, such as on Harley Davidson motor bikes and Levis Jeans, could follow.

Background

To deal with the problems facing the global steel industry, US President decided to impose 25% tariff on steel and 10% on aluminium.

So far, the U.S., which granted exemptions to Canada and Mexico. It has signalled a potential exemption for Australia, has made no mention of excluding Europe or Britain from the new tariff arrangements.

British steel accounts for 1% of U.S. steel imports, but 5% of U.K. steel exports by volume and 15% of it by value, largely because the exports focus on high-value products, including to the U.S. military.

In Britain, this signalled to many that the “special relationship” that Britain had been pointing to when it came to U.S.-U.K. relations post-Brexit had negligible tangible significance.

Trump warns India, China on ‘reciprocal tax’

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to impose “reciprocal tax” on countries like China and India if they do not match America’s tariff.

STATE-TELANGANA

HC issues contempt notice to State Chief Secretary

The Hyderabad High Court directed the Chief Secretary of Telangana government to be present before the court in person to answer why proceedings under contempt of court should not be initiated for not constituting Commission under Debt Relief Act in spite of undertaking given to the court in August 2017.

- The court was dealing with a contempt case filed by N. Indrasena Reddy, senior BJP leader. He had filed a PIL contending that as the State Commission for Debt Relief (Small Farmers, Agricultural Labourers and Rural Artisans) was not constituted, the farmers and labourers were not getting the relief provided under the law.

In August 2017, Telangana government had told the court that the commission would be constituted within three months.

ABC programme to save lives of accident victims launched

GVK EMRI, the pre-hospital ambulance based service organisation, working with the Telangana government has launched an “Active Bleeding Control (ABC)” programme of training volunteers in providing immediate first aid to accident victims by stopping severe bleeding and thereby saving lives.

- The first batch of 100 volunteers including police personnel, auto drivers, bus drivers, students, petrol bunk staff, shop owners and other roadside outlets had completed a 90-minute training programme and were given away certificates.
- They are part of a one-year pilot project taken up on State Highway No. 1 and National Highway , if it is found to be effective, it will be taken across the country with a plan to train 1000 volunteers.

Bleeding is the leading cause of death in road accidents and a mishap happens every minute and it turns out to be fatal every four minutes.

- Bystanders can play a vital role in saving lives with proper training as it was found that an ambulance arrives at the accident spot within 15-16 minutes due to various reasons.
- Since, the police were found to be reaching within six minutes, it was necessary to train them and bleeding can be controlled with a simple technique called “Pressure Bandage”. If it doesn’t work, another technique ‘Tourniquet’ which has to be done two inches above the bleeding spot can be tried till the ambulance arrives.

ABC is a joint collaboration between 108 GVK EMRI and PediStars (Pediatric Simulation Training and Research Society of India), Public Health Foundation of India, ILCOR/AHA, Road Safety Club at Hyderabad; Transport Department, Police Department and International Agencies like the American Heart Association (AHA) and World Point.

It is the first of its kind project in the world because US programme of “Stop the Bleed,” works in the top level unlike the grassroots-level initiative here.

STATE-AP

Eastern Ghats yield new bamboo species

In News

The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department believes it has found a new species of bamboo in the Maredumilli ranges of East Godavari district.

The species is yet to be given a botanical name, while local tribes call it kampa veduru.

The morphological studies and molecular characterisation (Random Amplified Polymorphic DNA analysis) confirmed it was a new species.

To validate the findings, samples were sent to the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) for DNA barcoding.

The work on the bamboo has been going on for five years, since the time scientists from the Forest Research Institute (FRI), Dehradun, visited Maredumilli.

The genetics of the species was compared with that of other bamboo varieties.

Further studies on floral and fruiting characteristics have to be conducted to finalise the status of the species and assign it a botanical name.

The flowering and fruiting of bamboos occurs once in 40 to 60 years. The specimens studied indicate its age to be about 30 to 40 years, which is close to flowering time.

Bamboos in the Eastern Ghats include *Dendrocalamus strictus*, *Bambusa bambos* (giant Indian bamboo, and *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*.