

June 6th news

International:

Kishanganga dam dispute: World Bank asks Pakistan to accept India's demand

The World Bank has asked Pakistan to accept an offer by India to appoint a neutral expert over the dispute over Kishanganga dam, which was inaugurated recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. According to Pakistan-based Dawn News, the World Bank has asked Pakistan to climb down from the demand of taking up the issue with the International Court of Arbitration (ICA).

In May, a high-powered Pakistani delegation led by Attorney General Ashtar Ausaf Ali, met with Kristalina Georgieva, World Bank Chief Executive Officer, and the regional management for South Asia

During the meetings, held at Pakistan's request to discuss issues regarding the Indus Waters Treaty and opportunities within the treaty to seek an amicable resolution, "several procedural options" for resolving the disagreement over the interpretation of the treaty's provisions were discussed, the bank had said.

While an agreement on the way forward was not reached at the conclusion of the meetings, the World Bank will continue to work with both countries to resolve the issues in an amicable manner and in line with the treaty provisions," the Bank had said in a statement at the end of the talks.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in May inaugurated the 330 MW Kishanganga hydroelectric project in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan had protested the inauguration claiming that the project on a river flowing into Pakistan will disrupt water supplies.

The project, located at Bandipore in North Kashmir, envisages diversion of water of Kishan Ganga river to underground power house through a 23.25-km-long head race tunnel to generate 1713 million units per annum.

The Kishanganga project was started in 2007 but on May 17, 2010, Pakistan moved for international arbitration against India under the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty

National:

Promotions in govt. offices should go on: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court on 5th June orally observed that promotions in government offices should go ahead in "accordance with law." The court was responding to the government's complaint that the entire promotion process was in limbo because of uncertainty over reservation in promotion for the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe employees.

A Bench of Justices A.K. Goel and Ashok Bhushan said nothing prevented the government from promoting employees in accordance with law. But the court was not clear about the law it was referring to.

Additional Solicitor-General Maninder Singh said promotions had come to a “standstill” because of the status quo order passed by the court in 2015 after the High Courts gave orders at cross-purposes. “I am the government and I want to give promotions as per the constitutional mandate,” he said.

Mr. Singh said the petition before the Bench was the Centre’s challenge to the Delhi High Court’s verdict of August 23 last, quashing the government order extending reservation in promotion to employees of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes beyond five years from November 16, 1992.

He argued that the Supreme Court’s 2006 judgement in the M. Nagaraj case was applicable to reservation in promotion.

Govt forms 3 key panels for museum of Prime Ministers Project

In a major push towards setting up a unique museum in Delhi on the 'Prime Ministers of India', the Culture Ministry has formed three high-powered panels that will work to implement the project.

Of the three committees, one will focus on project implementation, while the other two will concentrate on choice and development of content for the one-of-its-kind museum.

The Ministry has been planning to set up a modern museum that will tell the story of all the Prime Ministers of the country at the premises of the iconic Teen Murti Estate, which was the official residence of first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Economy:

Idea Cellular gets DoT approval for 100% FDI in merged entity

Paving the way for the approval of Idea Cellular and Vodafone India merger, the department of telecommunications (DoT) has cleared the former's proposal to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) limit to 100 per cent in the merged entity. Idea currently has FDI limit of 67.5 per cent.

The FDI approval is a milestone in the merger of the two companies, creating the country's largest telecom operator named Vodafone Idea. The two parties had already secured other statutory approvals from the Securities and Exchange Board of India, National Stock Exchange, BSE, Competition Commission of India and National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Mumbai. and NCLT, Ahmedabad.

The merger is expected to complete in the first half of this year, subject to the final approval from the DoT. Idea has called an extraordinary general meeting on June 26 to consider the proposals, including changing the name of the merged entity and raising funds of Rs 150 billion through non-convertible debentures. The top operator will have a revenue market share of around 37 per cent and around 433 million subscribers.

The companies had earlier this year announced a restructuring of the leadership team for the merged business that would have Kumar Mangalam Birla at the helm as the non-executive chairman.

Vodafone Chief Operating Officer (India) Balesh Sharma would be chief executive officer of the merged entity.