

21st July 2021

SC quashes some provisions of 97th Amendment dealing with co-operative societies

The Supreme Court on 20th July 2021 struck down certain provisions of the Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011 in so far as it introduced clauses dealing with the working of cooperative societies working within a state, saying the subject matter fell in the state list and “belongs wholly and exclusively to the State legislatures to legislate upon” and any change would require the ratification by at least one-half of the state legislatures as per Article 368(2) of the Constitution.

The ruling came from a bench of Justices R F Nariman, K M Joseph and B R Gavai which upheld a 2013 Gujarat High Court verdict that struck down parts of the amendment.

But while Justices Nariman and Gavai struck down only that part of Part IXB which dealt with cooperative societies confined to states, Justice Joseph in a separate judgment struck down the entire 97th constitutional amendment.

“The judgment of the High Court is upheld except to the extent that it strikes down the entirety of Part IXB of the Constitution of India. As held by us above, it is declared that Part IXB of the Constitution of India is operative only in so far as it concerns multi-State co-operative societies both within the various States and in the Union territories of India”, the SC ruled.

IIT Ropar develops first-of-its-kind Oxygen rationing device - AMLEX

To increase the life of medical oxygen cylinders three fold, the Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar has developed a first-of-its-kind Oxygen Rationing Device – AMLEX that supplies a required volume of oxygen to the patient during inhalation and trips when the patient exhales CO₂. This process saves oxygen which otherwise unnecessarily get wasted.

So far, during exhalation, the oxygen in the oxygen cylinder/pipe is pushed out along with the exhaled CO₂ by the user. This leads to wastage of a large volume of oxygen in long run. In addition to this, a large volume of oxygen escapes from the openings of the mask to the environment in the resting period (between inhalation and exhalation) due to continuous flow of life saving gas in the mask. As we have seen the demand of medical oxygen has jumped manifold amid the second wave of Covid-19, the device would help in stopping the unwanted wastage of the same.

“The device can operate on both portable power supply (battery) as well as line supply (220V-50Hz)”, said Director, IIT, Ropar, Prof. Rajeev Ahuja.

It has been developed by PhD students of Biomedical Engineering Department of the institution - Mohit Kumar, Ravinder Kumar and Amanpreet Chander under the guidance of Dr. Ashish Sahani, Assistant Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering.

'Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together': International Olympic Committee amends motto

The International Olympic Committee has amended its 'Faster, Higher, Stronger' motto to include the word 'Together', its President Thomas Bach said on 20th July 2021, highlighting the need for solidarity during difficult times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motto changes from 'Faster, Higher, Stronger' to 'Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together'

China's 600 kph maglev train makes public debut

China has unveiled a high-speed maglev train with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour. As per Chinese official media reports on 20th July 2021, it is stated to be the world's fastest ground vehicle.

The new maglev transportation system made its public debut in the coastal city of Qingdao, China's east Shandong province, state-run news agency reported.

The train can travel with two to 10 carriages, each holding more than 100 passengers, according to Ding Sansan, chief engineer of the project. The train provides the best solution for trips within the range of 1,500 kms, Ding said, adding it fills the speed gap between aviation and high-speed trains.

Haiti: Ariel Henry sworn in as new PM

In Haiti, Ariel Henry has been sworn in as the new prime minister, around two weeks after the country's President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated. Moïse had asked Henry to take up the role days before he was murdered in the capital Port-au-Prince. Ariel Henry could not take over the post immediately as he was locked in a political tussle with Claude Joseph, the country's interim PM at the time of the attack.

However, Joseph stepped down on 19th July 2021 paving the way not only for Henry's swearing-in but also for elections in September this year. After taking the oath, Henry said that one of his priorities would be to reassure the people that the government will do everything to restore order and security. The inauguration took place as an official memorial began for Moïse, who was killed at his private residence on 7 July. Jovenel Moïse was killed on 7th July. He had ruled by decree in Haiti since 2018.

Jeff Bezos launches to space aboard New Shepard rocket ship

Billionaire Jeff Bezos blasted into space, in the first crewed flight of his rocket ship, New Shepard.

He was accompanied by Mark Bezos, his brother, Wally Funk, an 82-year-old pioneer of the space race, and an 18-year-old student.

They travelled in a capsule with the biggest windows flown in space, offering stunning views of the Earth. New Shepard, built by Bezos' company Blue Origin, is designed to serve the burgeoning market for space tourism.

The passengers included the oldest person who has been to space – Ms Funk – and the youngest, student Oliver Daemen.

The spacecraft lifted off at 14:12 BST (09:12 EDT) from a private launch site near Van Horn, Texas. They parachuted back down to the West Texas desert 11 minutes later.

Tadej Pogacar (Slovenia) of UAE Team Emirates wins 3,414 km Tour de France cycle race in in 82 hours, 56 minutes and 36 seconds

Tadej Pogacar claimed another landmark victory in the 18th stage of the Tour de France to edge closer to retaining his title as a cloud of doping suspicions hung over the world's greatest cycling race on Thursday.

The Slovenian's brutal acceleration 500 metres from the line, at the top of Luz Ardiden (13.3km at 7.4%), could not be matched by his rivals as Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard and Ecuador's Richard Carapaz finished two seconds behind in second and third respectively.