

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

### **1. India demands review of Pak Bill linked to Kulbhushan Jadhav's right to appeal**

India asked Pakistan to “take appropriate steps to address the shortcomings” in a bill introduced in the country’s national assembly last week **providing for the right to appeal** to Indian death-row convict Kulbhushan Jadhav.

The Ministry of External Affairs’ official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the bill has a provision for inviting the municipal court to decide whether any prejudice has been caused to Jadhav on account of the failure to provide consular access in accordance with a verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

“We call upon Pakistan to take appropriate steps to address the shortcomings in the bill,” Bagchi said at a media briefing. He said the municipal court cannot be the arbiter of whether the State has fulfilled its obligation under international law. Bagchi also called upon the neighbouring country to comply with the judgment of the ICJ in the case relating to Jadhav.

Jadhav (50), a retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. Subsequently, India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence. The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an “effective review and reconsideration” of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also grant consular access to India without further delay.

### **2. Kerala HC asks filmmaker to appear for questioning, grants interim bail in case of arrest**

Kerala High Court directed filmmaker Aisha Sultana, charged with sedition for her “bioweapon” remark, to appear before the police in Lakshadweep for interrogation, but also granted her interim bail in case she is arrested.

The film director-cum-activist—a prominent face of Lakshadweep residents’ protest against a slew of draft proposals mooted by administrator Praful K Patel for the “development” of the island chain—had approached the High Court fearing arrest. The sedition case was registered against her on June 9 by the Kavaratti police following a complaint from BJP leader Abdul Khader Haji.

In an interim order, a single-judge bench of Justice Ashok Menon said Sultana should be released on interim bail for a week after executing a bond of Rs 50,000 in the event of arrest. She was told to appear before the Kavaratti police on June 20 for questioning.

### **3. Govt amends Cable TV network rules**

Paving the way “for a strong institutional system for redressing grievances while placing accountability and responsibility on the broadcasters and their self-regulating bodies”, the government on Thursday amended the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 to give legal recognition to the self-regulatory bodies for television. The self-regulatory bodies for television content will be registered with the government.

In a statement, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said the amendment will provide “a statutory mechanism for redressal of grievances/complaints of citizens relating to content broadcast by television channels in accordance with the provisions of the Cable Television Network Act, 1995”.

Sources said that this will bring the television’s self-regulatory mechanism at par with that being set-up for OTT players and digital news publishers, as envisaged in the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, issued in February.

#### **4. Chinese crewed spaceship docks with new space station**

A Chinese spaceship carrying a three-person crew docked with China’s new space station at the start of 3-month mission, marking a milestone in the country’s ambitious space program.

The Shenzhou-12 craft connected with the Tianhe space station module about six hours after takeoff from the Jiuquan launch center on the edge of the Gobi Desert.

The three astronauts are the first to take up residency in the main living module and will carry out experiments, test equipment, conduct maintenance and prepare the station for receiving two laboratory modules next year.

The mission brings to 14 the number of astronauts China has launched into space since 2003, becoming only the third country after the former Soviet Union and the United States to do so on its own.

China and Russia this week also unveiled an ambitious plan for a joint International Lunar Research Station running through 2036. That could compete and possibly conflict with the multinational Artemis Accords, a blueprint for space cooperation that supports NASA’s plans to return humans to the moon by 2024 and to launch an historic human mission to Mars.