

5 chemicals banned in firecrackers

Ahead of the festive seasons of Dussehra and Deepavali, the Supreme Court on Monday prohibited the use of five chemicals, labelled as toxic by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in the manufacture of firecrackers.

A Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur and Deepak Gupta recorded in its short order that, “that no firecrackers manufactured by the respondents shall contain antimony, lithium, mercury, arsenic and lead in any form whatsoever.

It is the responsibility of the Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation (PESO) to ensure compliance particularly in Sivakasi.”

The order came after the court heard the submissions from officials of the CPCB and Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation’s (PESO) Firework Research and Development Centre at Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu.

The court asked the CPCB to clarify on the use of strontium, another chemical branded toxic by the pollution body, in firecrackers. . Manufacturers however denied using these chemicals.

Even as the court gave the CPCB time till September 15 to provide detailed information on the environmental impact, especially air pollution, caused by firecrackers, private manufacturers, who are suffering a court ban on sale of firecrackers in the Delhi and NCR regions, tried to reason that firecrackers is not the only source of pollution.

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India, Russia to hold mega war games in October

In the midst of evolving security situation in the region, India and Russia will hold a mega war game in October involving their armies, navies and the air forces for the first time to further ramp up military ties. The exercise Indra, which will be held in Russia from October 19 to 29, will primarily focus on achieving coordination between forces of the two countries in a tri-services integrated theatre command scenario, military sources said. It will be for the first time India will participate in a tri-services exercise with a foreign country with such a large scale participation by the Navy, the Army and the Air Force, they said.

A total of 350 Indian Army personnel will participate at the mega exercise and the contingent will be led by a major-general rank official. The contingents by the Navy and the IAF will also be sizeable in numbers, the sources said.

The exercise is taking place at a time when India's ties with China have nosedived due to the simmering border dispute and its ties with Pakistan have deteriorated over cross-border terrorism and number of other issues.

The sources said the exercise will take place in three locations in Russia including in mountainous Vladivostok region.

The armies, navies and air forces of Russia are holding bilateral exercises separately but this is for the first time, both the countries will carry out a tri-services exercise.

Russia has been a long-standing defence partner of India and both the countries are now eyeing to further deepen the ties.

During Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s visit to Russia in June, both countries had decided to "upgrade and intensify" defence cooperation through joint manufacture, co-production and co-development of key military hardware and equipment.

A vision document, issued then had said that both the countries also decided to work towards a qualitatively higher level of military-to-military cooperation.

India has already decided to significantly ramp up its defence capability and has lined up billions of dollars of procurement proposals as part of military modernisation.

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Melbourne named most liveable city

Australia's Melbourne city has been named the world's most liveable city for the sixth consecutive year, according to the Global Liveability Ranking.

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70-ft Buddha statue to adorn tourist project in Ghantasala - ANDHRA PRADESH

To develop Ghantasala village in Krishna district as one of the prime Buddhist tourist spots in the State, decks have been cleared for the construction of a Rs. 1.5-crore project here.

“The new facility will be themed on the *Mahaparinirvana* of the Buddha. A two-storied structure in Buddhist architecture resembling a pedestal with a 100-ft wide and 70-ft high Buddha in the *Mahaparinirvana* posture will be a major highlight,” said Executive Director of the AP Tourism Development Corporation Mallikarjuna Rao.

Mr. Rao has worked on the design and architecture of the project which was released by Krishna district Collector B. Lakshmikantham on Saturday.

On top of the two-storey structure will be an imposing statue of the reclining Buddha.

This is a major iconographic and statuary pattern of Buddhism. It represents the historical Buddha during his last illness, about to enter the *Mahaparinirvana*. It shows Buddha lying on the right flank, his head resting on a cushion or on his right elbow, supporting his head with his hand. This pattern seems to have emerged at the same time as other representations of the Buddha in the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara.

The two floors will house a Buddhist library, a meditation centre, an auditorium for spiritual classes, an exhibition hall for digital replicas of the Buddhist antiques exhibited in the Paris museum and monasteries.

The project is coming up in a 2-and-half acre private land donated by a non-resident Telugu Gorrepati Ramanadha Babu on behalf of a Trust run in the names of his parents.

Tenders for the project have been finalised, designs approved and administration sanction given. The work may start in a couple of weeks.

In Buddhism, *Mahaparinirvana* means the ultimate state — everlasting, highest peace and happiness — entered by an Awakened Being (Buddha).

Ghantasala, known as Katakasila in the ancient times, was a renowned Buddhist centre located near the coast. Ptolemy, the Greek geographer, had made a specific mention of an emporium of Kontakossyla in the region of Misolia (present Machilipatnam).

The maha stupa was once encased with well decorated sculptured slabs like that of Amaravathi and had an ornate railing.

Initially, the archaeological significance of Ghantasala was reported by Boswell in 1870-71 and the site was subsequently subjected to excavations by Alexander Rea which brought out the stupa architecture in detail.

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Scientists discover 2 new earthworm species in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Scientists have discovered two new primitive species of earthworm in the Western Ghats mountain ranges in Kerala.

Researchers at Mahatma Gandhi University in Kerala and Shoolini University in Himachal Pradesh named the new earthworm species *Drawida polydiverticulata* and *Drawida thomasi*. For *Drawida polydiverticulata*, its multiple lobes, also called diverticulums—an organ located in the front of its body—are unique amongst the members of the genus.

This species was found to be widespread in the protected shola grasslands of the Munnar region, including Eravikulam National Park, Pampadun Shola National Park and Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, researchers said.

The second new earthworm, *Drawida thomasi*, was collected at the Kozhippara Waterfalls near Kakkadampoyil, at the border between Malappuram and Kozhikode, they said.

In addition to the new species belonging to the primitive family Moniligastridae, the scientists also report the occurrence of five species of the same genus that have not previously been recorded from the state. To date, there are 73 species of the genus *Drawida* confirmed to be living in the Indian subcontinent, researchers said.

However, the greatest concentration (43 species) is found in the Western Ghats. The genus has an important centre of speciation in Kerala, they said. Prior to this study published in the journal *ZooKeys*, there had been 16 *Drawida* species known from the state with ten of them being unique.

The present discovery of two new species and five new local records further contributes to the vast species richness of the genus in the state. At present, there are about 200 species known in the genus *Drawida*. Their habitats are spread across India throughout the Indo-China region to southeastern Asia and up to the north in Japan.

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Cabinet approves Closure of loss making Bharat Wagon and Engineering Company**Cabinet approves Closure of loss making Bharat Wagon and Engineering Company**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal of Ministry of Railways to close the Bharat Wagon and Engineering Company Limited (BWEL) - a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under Ministry of Railways.

626 employees of BWEL will be benefitted from the voluntary retirement scheme to be offered at 2007 pay scale. The Government will have to provide one time grant off 151.18 crore towards severance package and for clearing the current liabilities of the company.

This measure will stop flow of financial support from public funds for carrying on the operations of sick/loss making BWEL resulting in savings for the Government.

The implementation will be done as per the timelines prescribed in the guidelines issued by Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) on time bound closure of sick/loss making CPSEs.

In view of the continues poor physical and financial performance of the company for more than 10 years, in spite of financial assistance and other support provided by Ministry of Railways combined with low probability of its revival in future, Bharat Wagon and Engineering Co. Ltd. is being wound up.

Background:

BWEL was incorporated on 4th Dec' 1978 as a CPSE after taking over two sick private sector companies - Arthur Butler & Company, Muzaffarpur and Britannia Engineering Company, Mokama. The Company was referred to BIFR (Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction) in December, 2000 and was declared sick in the year 2002. The Company continues to be a sick Company since then. The administrative control of the company was transferred from Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) to the MoR in August, 2008, as approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. The company is engaged in the manufacture and repair of wagons, and is having two manufacturing units, at Mokama and Muzaffarpur in Bihar.

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National Sports Museum to be established in New Delhi**National Sports Museum to be established in New Delhi**

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is going to establish National Sports Museum, first of its kind, at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi. The decision was taken three months back and after a series of meetings and his personal visits to several locations in the capital, the current venue for museum was finalized by the Sports Minister Shri Vijay Goel himself.

Shri Vijay Goel said, the Museum will showcase the India's achievements in sports and also focus on the traditional sports within the country. He said, the aim of the Museum is to popularise the sports as a way of life within the country. Accordingly, the proposed Museum would go beyond the classical approach of a collection of memorabilia to become an interactive venue of interest for all age groups. In addition, Shri Goel said, it will display achievements of the Indian greats in sports and also act as an educational hub and offer opportunity for the young to delve into some sporting activity.

Shri Vijay Goel has appealed to all past and present sports persons and members of public to contribute any memorabilia held by them for permanent display in the National Sports Museum. He said such contribution will be recognized and acknowledged.

Shri Goel said that it is proposed that the Museum will have audio-visual display of rules and legacy events pertaining to various sports as part of education for the budding sportspersons, a well-equipped library of sports and physical fitness, painting gallery and amphitheater for screening of legacy matches/ contests/games is also planned.

He said, the Museum will also have a cafeteria, an activity zone, a souvenir/pro shop and a play area. It is proposed that the activities planned in various segments will include sporting activities, sports related computer games and kiosks selling sports memorabilia and sports equipment.

Shri Vijay Goel said the first phase for establishing the museum will commence soon as the idea has been transformed from concept to museum model stage by the experts.

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Municipal areas exempt from SC ban

On March 31, the court dismissed their plea for modification of the ban and confirmed that the ban was restricted not just to liquor vends along the highways but also to larger establishments, including pubs and hotels.

In May, the Tamil Nadu Bars and Clubs Owners Association described before the court the “crippling effect” of the ban in the State. Counsel Arvind Datar conveyed to the Bench how businesses crumbled and over two lakh employees were rendered jobless.

“Eight out of 10 hotels on Chennai’s arterial Mount Road is closed,” Mr. Datar told the court.

NGO petition

The court order is based on a special leave petition filed by Arrive Safe Society, an NGO, challenging a notification issued by the Chandigarh administration on March 16, 2017 — post the Supreme Court’s ban order on December 15, 2016 — declaring three stretches of State highways as “major district roads”.

These inter-sectoral roads run within the city. The NGO claimed the notification was issued to “circumvent” the ban, which was rejected by the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Dismissing the NGO’s petition, the Supreme Court observed that the “judgment of this court dated December 15, 2016 addresses dangers to life and safety caused by drunken driving on national and State highways and specifically deals with the problem from the perspective of the availability of alcohol”.

“Roads within a metropolitan city essentially provide connectivity within the city. Chandigarh is an illustration,” Justice Chandrachud, who wrote the order, observed.

In a July 4 hearing on the NGO’s petition, the court *prima facie* observed that there may be nothing wrong in denotifying stretches of highways running within city limits as city roads and such de-classification does not violate its ban.

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Press Communique**Press Communique**

Shri Justice Dipak Misra was sworn in as the 45th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India at a ceremony held today (August 28, 2017) in the Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan. He made and subscribed to the oath of office before the President.

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