

31 May 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Plea calls for NSA against hoarding](#)

Context:

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court to invoke the National Security Act (NSA) against hoarding, profiteering, adulteration and black-marketing of COVID-19 essentials, including drugs and equipment.

National Security Act (NSA):

- NSA is a **preventive detention law**.
- The NSA empowers the Centre or a State government to **detain a person to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to national security**.
- The government can also detain a person to prevent him from **disrupting public order or for the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community**.

Read more about the National Security Act, covered in the [17th February 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

2. 'Accused denied anticipatory bail can be given protection'

Context:

A Supreme Court judgment has said that **an accused denied anticipatory bail can, in exceptional circumstances, still be given protection from immediate arrest** if his sudden imprisonment by the State would push his personal affairs and family into crisis.

Read more on [bail in India](#) in the linked article.

Details:

- The Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana observed that while dismissing the anticipatory bail plea, **in exceptional cases** where the accused is the **sole breadwinner of the family**, courts had the power to allow an accused to **retain his/her personal liberty for some time** in order to **make arrangements for his/her family** before surrendering in the trial court.
- It was emphasised that the **grant or rejection of bail** in such cases had a **direct bearing on the fundamental right to life and liberty of an individual**.
- Judges were urged to pay equal attention to the **humane side of criminal law** while hearing pleas for anticipatory bail.

What is the need?

- The concept of anticipatory bail germinated from [Article 21](#) of the Constitution.
- According to Article 21 - **Protection of Life and Personal Liberty**: No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
- At times, courts may **need to look beyond the strict confines of the written text to secure complete justice**. The High Courts and the Supreme Court have the powers to do so.
- "Even when not inclined to grant anticipatory bail to an accused, there may be circumstances where the High Court is of the opinion that it is necessary to protect the person apprehending arrest for some time, due to exceptional circumstances, until they surrender before the trial court," Justice Ramana wrote.

Conclusion:

- It was emphasised that **courts must not use this discretion** to **grant “judicial largesse”** to accused persons.
- Such an order [to grant protection from arrest despite denying anticipatory bail] must necessarily be **narrowly tailored to protect the interests of the accused** while taking into consideration the **concerns of the investigating authority**.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Govt. expands credit for oxygen units

Context:

The Centre has **enlarged the scope of the [Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme \(ECLGS\)](#) - ECLGS 4.0** to cover loans up to ₹2 crore for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants at healthcare facilities.

Details:

- ECLGS 4.0 includes 100% guarantee cover to loans up to ₹2 crore to hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants, interest rate capped at 7.5%.
- The **ECLGS was launched in 2020** in the backdrop of the pandemic, to help businesses, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) cope with the national lockdown's adverse effects.
- Under the scheme, **100% guarantee coverage will be provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company**. The loans are provided by **Banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)**.
- The credit would be in the form of a **Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL) facility**.
- Interest rates under the Scheme are capped at **25% for banks and Financial Institutions**, and at **14% for NBFCs**.

Read more about the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme covered in [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis. June 10th, 2020](#).

Note:

- The **civil aviation sector** has also been brought under the ambit of ECLGS.
- **The scheme's validity has been extended** till September 30 from June 30 and permitted lenders to disburse credit till December 31, 2021.

Issue:

- The scheme's allocation has **not been increased from the original ₹3 lakh crore**. About ₹2.55 lakh crore has already been utilised.
 - only about ₹45,000 crore remains to cope with the demand from newly included beneficiaries.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. China's space station plans gather pace with cargo docking

Context:

The **Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft** was launched on a **Long March-7 rocket** and docked eight hours later with the space station's **first core module - Tianhe** which means **heavenly harmony**.

Details:

- The **Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft** has been described as the **delivery guy for China's space station**.
 - Tianzhou-2 is the largest cargo spacecraft in service.
 - It carried a range of supplies. It is also carrying cargo and propellant that will replenish the supplies of the Tianhe module.
- It will be followed by the launch of another **cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-3**, and **two manned missions, Shenzhou-12 and Shenzhou-13**, in 2021, each carrying three astronauts who will spend several months in orbit.
- The **six missions to follow this year**, including for the space station's second and third modules, Wentian and Mengtian, will close to complete the construction of China's first space station, expected to be finished in 2022.

Note:

- The **Space Station** China is building is called **Tiangong** which means "**Heavenly Space**".
- The space station, which will be only the **second after the International Space Station (ISS)**, has been designed with a **lifespan of 10 years but could last 15 years, or until 2037**.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: HEALTH

1. Only a global effort can tame COVID-19

Background:

- India has been witnessing an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases in the second wave of the pandemic.
- Given the people shedding their vaccine hesitancy, there has been **a surge in vaccine demand** in the general populace.
- India has been reporting **severe vaccine shortages** in many parts of the country and the general criticism of the **government's Vaccine Maitri policy** has resulted in the government imposing temporary restrictions on the export of COVID-19 vaccines from India.

Limitations of vaccine nationalism:

- Although the government's move to temporarily restrict vaccine exports is much necessary to meet domestic demand, any definite move towards vaccine nationalism will be **detrimental to global efforts to contain the virus**.
 - A 2020 report of the WHO on the urgent health challenges for the next decade expresses concern on the lack of access to medical products, including medicines and vaccines in the developing world.
- The pandemic needs to be checked globally in a coordinated manner. If this is not done, the **virus will keep mutating** and no country can remain immune to the evolving new variants.
- The increasing number of reports of new variants of the novel coronavirus underscores the fact that no individual or country is safe until everyone is safe.
- Thus there is a need for globally coordinated efforts to build herd immunity through mass vaccination.

Challenges for India in ensuring universal vaccination:

Large population to be vaccinated:

- The opening up of the vaccination process for all adults will require around 2 billion doses of vaccines.
- Inoculating this huge population will **require time, resources and efforts**.
- Only a little over 12% of the population has received one dose and 3.2% has received both doses in India so far.

Limited production capacities:

- The current production capacity in India is just over 70 million doses per month.
- Despite the best efforts from the government as well as the private players involved, in the best-case scenario, by June-July, the production capacity for vaccine production is expected to rise to 158 million doses per month.
- Despite the proposed domestic production of Sputnik in addition to Covishield and Covaxin, the anticipated production in the near future will **not be sufficient to meet the enormous vaccine demand**.

Challenges in scaling up production capacities:

- Scaling up the production of existing vaccines and producing new vaccines is not easy.
- **Unavailability of raw materials, complexities in the transfer of technology, and intellectual property rights** and the reluctance of the pharma companies and the parent countries act as a major barrier in scaling up the production of vaccines.

Way forward:

Scaling up production:

- India could consider the following options for scaling up the production of vaccines.
 - The available capacity for vaccine production in India should be re-purposed for the production of COVID-19 vaccines.
 - As per the data available from the National Health Profile 2019, published by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India has an installed capacity of 8,151.7 million doses of vaccines annually, in the private and public sectors.
 - The government can consider **tasking the public sector vaccine manufacturers** with the production of Covaxin by providing support to them.

Catering to both domestic as well as global demands:

- The need of the hour is the mass production of vaccines in order to inoculate the global population.
- India should shoulder some of the burden to ensure mass production of COVID-19 vaccines for the mass vaccination of the global population to ensure global herd immunity against the virus. Upholding its reputation as the pharmacy of the world, **India needs to cater to the demand for vaccines of the global population**, especially in poorer countries.

Global cooperation:

- Global cooperation is needed to create an environment where the companies interested in producing vaccines can get an open licence from the innovators. The **proposed WTO waiver for TRIPS provisions** could play a critical role in this direction. This will allow multiple producers to take up the production of the vaccine. The increased supply will help bring down the prices of the vaccines.

For related information refer to:

[CNA dated May 7, 2021: Intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines.](#)

- Global cooperation is also required for the **sequencing of the viral genome to track and control the multiple variants**. Given the doubts being expressed by the experts about the

effectiveness of some of the COVID-19 vaccines against the new variants of the virus, there is a need to develop new vaccines or tweak the existing ones to become effective against the new variants.

Devising long term strategy:

- As infectious diseases are expected to increase in the coming years, India needs to frame a **long-term strategy to enhance supply at the domestic and international level.**
 - The failure to identify public sector enterprises in the pharmaceuticals sector as strategically important, under the newly released Public Sector Enterprise Policy, needs to be rectified at the earliest. Public sector enterprises in the pharmaceutical sector should be incentivized to grow and expand.
 - **Research and Development studies** on infectious diseases should be promoted.
 - India should focus on **building resilient supply chains for its domestic production centres** while negotiating for the right to equitable access of pharma products for developing countries in WTO negotiations.

Imbibing new vaccine technology:

- Recent studies point out the benefits of **mRNA vaccine technology** compared to conventional vaccine technologies.
 - Easy scalability in production
 - The available mRNA COVID-19 vaccines have proven to be more effective than other vaccines
- India too needs to imbibe this new technology of vaccine production going forward.

For more information on mRNA vaccine technology, refer to:

[Nov 11, 2020 CNA: Dose of optimism](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. Mrs. Besant and the Press Act

- **Young India** was a weekly paper in English published by Mahatma Gandhi. He used Young India to spread his ideology and thoughts regarding the use of nonviolence in organising movements.
- Other newspapers with which Mahatma Gandhi was involved include **Harijan in English, Navjivan (Gujarati), Harijan Sevak in Hindi and Indian Opinion (from South Africa).**

2. Banrawats

- The Banrawats are a **native endangered tribe** originating and living in **Uttarakhand**.
- They are also called **Banrajis, Vanrawats, Vanrajis.**

- They are basically **nomadic hunter-gatherers**, but also work as **agriculture and forest labourers**.
- They are mainly dependent on forests, and also **practise shifting cultivation**.
- They speak a **Tibeto-Burman language** generally called "**Rawat**".

3. One-horned rhino

- The Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), also called the Indian rhino, greater one-horned rhinoceros or great Indian rhinoceros is a rhinoceros species **native to the Indian subcontinent**.
- **IUCN Red List – Vulnerable**
- Indian rhinos once ranged throughout the entire stretch of the Indo-Gangetic Plain, but excessive hunting and agricultural development **reduced its range drastically to 11 sites in northern India and southern Nepal**.
- Today, **approximately 75% of the entire population of Greater One-horned Rhinoceros now occurs in India in three states viz, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal**.
- The **Census of Rhinoceros** is undertaken at the **State-level by the respective State Governments periodically**.

G. Tidbits

1. Monsoon onset over Kerala delayed: IMD

What's in News?

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the arrival of the southwest monsoon over Kerala has been delayed.

- As per the latest meteorological indications, the **south-westerly winds could strengthen further gradually from 1st June, resulting in likely enhancement in rainfall activity over Kerala**.
 - Hence the monsoon onset over Kerala is likely to take place by 3rd June 2021.
- According to Skymet, the monsoon had arrived as two of the three criteria as established by IMD had been met.

The criteria:

- **Rain-bearing westerlies** being at a **minimum depth and speed**;
- **At least 60% of the available 14 stations in Kerala and coastal Karnataka reporting rainfall of 2.5 mm or more for two consecutive days** after May 10; and
- **A certain degree of clouding**, indicated by a parameter called 'outgoing longwave radiation' (OLR), being **below 200 W/square metre**.

Since 2005, the monsoon has arrived within the error margin of the IMD's weather models, except in 2015.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1: Consider the following statements regarding the National Security Act (NSA):

1. The NSA is a preventive detention law that empowers only the Centre to detain a person to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to national security.
2. Under NSA, a person could be kept in the dark about the reasons for his arrest for up to five days.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: b

Explanation:

- NSA is a preventive detention law.
- The NSA empowers the Centre or a State government to detain a person to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to national security.
- Under NSA, a person could be kept in the dark about the reasons for his arrest for up to five days.

Q2: Under 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013' which of the following circumstances may amount to sexual harassment?

1. implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment.
2. humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.
3. implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status.

Options:

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 1 & 2
- c. Only 2 & 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

Under 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, the following circumstances, among other circumstances, if it occurs or is present in relation to or connected with any act or behaviour of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:

- implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment; or
- implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her employment; or
- implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status; or
- interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her; or
- humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.

Q3: Consider the following statements:

1. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) is a Public Sector entity under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
2. IREDA reported an all-time high annual Profit Before Tax (PBT) in 2020-21.
3. IREDA has been notified as a "Public Financial Institution" as well as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 1 & 2
- c. Only 2 & 3
- d. All of the above

Answer: d**Explanation:**

- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) is a Public Sector entity under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- IREDA reported an all-time high annual Profit Before Tax (PBT) in 2020-21.
- IREDA has been notified as a "Public Financial Institution" as well as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC).
 - A public financial institution takes funds from customers and places them in financial assets. The most common financial assets include deposits, loans and bonds issued by or made by the public financial institution.

Q4: 'Camp David Accords' are related to which of the following countries?

- a. Israel and Egypt

- b. Israel and Saudi Arabia
- c. Israel and UAE
- d. Israel and Jordan

Answer: a

Explanation:

The Camp David Accords were a pair of political agreements signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin that normalised connections between Israel and Egypt in 1978.

Q5: Which of the following are not necessarily the consequences of the proclamation of the President's rule in a State? (UPSC 2017)

- 1. Dissolution of the State Legislative Assembly
- 2. Removal of the Council of Ministers in the State
- 3. Dissolution of the local bodies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b

Explanation:

- President's rule is the suspension of state government and imposition of direct Union government rule in a state.
- When the President's Rule is imposed in a state, the President removes/dismisses the council of ministers in the state headed by the chief minister. The governor of the state carries on the administration of the state.
- The President can either suspend or dissolve the Legislative assembly. Therefore, the dissolution of the state legislative assembly is not necessarily the consequence of the proclamation.
- The President's rule does not lead to the dissolution of local bodies.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

- 1. Explain Transformational Leadership and Situational Leadership with the help of relevant examples. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 4 Ethics)

2. Growing vaccine nationalism in major vaccine producing countries will continue to have ripple effects on Covid-19. In the light of the statement, discuss the global approach to vaccine equity. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 2 International Relations).

