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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. Kin of J&K youth held under PSA to move SC

Syllabus: Indian Constitution- Evolution, Features, Significant Provisions

Mains: Preventive detention laws in India

Context: Families of several youth taken into preventive detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) have decided to file a petition before the Supreme Court alleging that their kin were “shifted outside jails and held incommunicado” in violation of the provisions of the Act.

What is Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act,1978 ?

- It is a [preventive detention](#) law, under which a person is taken into custody to prevent him/her from acting in any manner that is detrimental to security and public order of the state.
- It is enforced by an administrative order passed either by the Divisional Commissioner or the District Magistrate, and not by a detention order by police.
- Whereas PSA applies only to Jammu and Kashmir, it is very similar to the National Security Act of the Union government and other state governments for preventive detention.
- An amendment passed by the Lieutenant Governor last year allows persons detained under the PSA in Jammu & Kashmir can now be detained in jails outside the state.

What happens once the PSA is slapped?

- Under the act when a person is detained, the DM, in writing, communicates the reason for the detention to the person within 05 days(10 days in exceptional circumstances)
- On this basis, the detained person can make a representation against the order.
- The DM also has the discretion not to disclose all the facts if those facts are against “public interest”.
- The DM has to put the detention order within 04 weeks before an advisory board, consisting of three members with a former judge of the High Court as chairperson.
- The DM also has to place the representation made by the detained person.
- Within the 06th week from the date of detention, the advisory board submits a binding report to the government, which will determine if the detention is in public interest.

Why is it considered oppressive?

- This allows the detention without a formal charge and without trial.
 - It can be slapped on someone who is already in police custody, or someone acquitted by the court, or immediately on a person after being granted bail by a court.
 - Detention can be up to two years.
- Detained persons need not be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of the detention and they don't have the right to move a bail application before a criminal court.
- Also, The DM who has passed the order has protection under the Act from prosecution or any legal proceedings.
- The only way this administrative preventive detention order can be challenged is through a [habeas corpus](#) petition in the High Court or the Supreme Court filed by relatives of the detained person.
- However, if the order is quashed, the government can pass another order and detain the same person again.
- One unofficial data estimates that around 200 youth are in detention under PSA this year so far.
- With most jails running full in J&K, detained persons are shifted to jails in other states and UT's.
 - Because of this arbitrary move, the families cannot communicate with the detenues and also the detenues are unable to get effective legal remedies.

Constitutional and other safeguards available to detenues:

- [Article 22](#) of the Constitution provides the remedy in cases of preventive detention in India.
- The Supreme Court has advised for the mandatory compliance of procedural safeguards to overcome the misuse of powers under the act.
- Therefore, the DM has to show that the detention order follows the procedure established by law; any violation of these procedural safeguards is to be termed violation of constitutional rights.

Way Forward:

- The act should be brought in line with the all-India legislation.
- The J & K administration must use restraint in using the act against political leaders to accelerate the establishment of peace and finding a political solution.
- Recent amendment on allowing persons to be detained in jails outside the state should be done away with.

Category: INDIAN CONSTITUTION

1. Media running kangaroo courts

Syllabus: Separation of powers between various organs, dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

Mains: Media- Fourth Pillar of Democracy

Context: Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana recently expressed his displeasure over media running “kangaroo courts” on complicated issues.

What is a Kangaroo court:

- It is a court that disregards accepted standards of law or justice and carries no official standing in the territory within which it resides.
- It ignores due process and comes to a prejudiced conclusion.
- The term may also apply to a court held by a legitimate judicial authority which intentionally disregards the court's legal or ethical obligations.

Impact of Media trials on Democracy:

- Media trial is verifying the conviction of a person through television, social media or newspaper before or after the decision of the Hon'ble Courts in any case.
- The chief justice had opined that the media had breached its responsibility, taking democracy two steps backwards, affecting people and harming the system.
- Media trials running Kangaroo courts do not comply with procedure established in Indian laws.
- This also affects the mental state of the probing agencies and judiciary, causing delays.
- Ill-informed, biased and agenda-driven debates in the media on issues pending in courts affects justice delivery.
- Extreme, prejudiced media trials also affect the privacy of the subjects and the right to [fair trial](#) which goes against the fundamental right guaranteed by Article 21 of the Indian constitution.
- Media trial violate the doctrine of separation of powers which forms the core part of democracy.

Freedom of Media:

- The major concerns expressed by the judiciary are “trial by media” and “prejudice”. Due process of law demands that people should be tried by courts of law and not be pilloried by the media.
- As a subset of freedom of expression and expression, freedom of the press is also subject to all reasonable restrictions imposed on private individuals.

Regulatory provisions:

- The Press Council of India has released various guidelines to improve the standards of news reporting in India emphasizing the need for fair and accurate reporting.
- The norms urge that any criticism of the judiciary should be published with great caution, avoiding single-sided inferences with partial tones. But these norms cannot be legally enforced, and largely observed in the breach.
- PCI has criminal contempt powers to regulate the publication of prejudicial media reports.

Nut Graf: *As a fourth pillar of democracy, the media has wide-ranging roles in society. Right to be informed is a fundamental right which cannot be denied to the people. Therefore, free and a healthy press is essential to the functioning of democracy. The responsibility of the media rises with growth in its reach. It is necessary that the media strengthens itself with help of civil society and the government in its position as a pillar of democracy. Respecting the doctrine of separation of power, the media must protect democratic principles.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Monkeypox is a ‘public health emergency’

Category: GS3- Science and Technology

Syllabus: *Issues related to Health*

Mains: Zoonotic diseases and its impact on public health

Context: World Health Organization classifies monkeypox as a ‘public health emergency’

Introduction:

- The WHO has officially declared the global monkeypox outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern, one step below that of a “pandemic”.
- Recent outbreak has affected over 14,500 people and killed 03 people in 72 countries.
- European and American countries have reported the highest numbers of cases currently.
- Currently the disease outbreak is majorly among men, especially among men who identified themselves as gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, in urban areas, and are clustered in social and sexual networks.
- India has reported 03 cases so far.

What does the declaration as a ‘public health emergency of international concern’ mean?

- The declaration represents “an extraordinary event, which constitutes a public health risk to other states through international spread”.
- The current declaration on monkeypox is “temporary” and reviewed every three months.
- The guidelines direct countries to step up surveillance, spread awareness, and ensure that at-risk groups are not stigmatized

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**1. How will SC ruling on abortion impact women?*****Syllabus: Important Supreme Court Judgment******Prelims: MTP act- Provisions*****Context:**

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India allowed an unmarried woman to end her pregnancy at 24 weeks.
- The woman's argument to terminate the pregnancy was that her relationship with her partner had changed who had refused to marry her and being unmarried and raising a child carries a stigma in society.
- This Supreme Court judgment came upon an appeal against the Delhi High Court judgment in the same case.

Background:**Delhi High Court's judgment:**

- The Delhi High Court had refused to allow the termination of the pregnancy of the unmarried woman, citing the provisions of the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act**. The Court had held that since she was unmarried and since the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act allowed only married women to terminate the pregnancy after 20 weeks, she would not be eligible to get an abortion.
- Also the Court argued that terminating the pregnancy at this stage would amount to killing the foetus.

Details:

- The Supreme Court, took note of the amendment to the MTP Act in 2021 wherein the word husband was replaced by partner. This the Court interpreted as meaning that the law was not confined to only those in marital relationships.
- The Bench noted that the petitioner cannot be denied the benefit under the MTP act, on the ground that she was unmarried, as this would amount to discrimination.
- As per the MTP Act, all women are allowed to get a medical termination of pregnancy before 20 weeks. But **only certain categories of women are allowed to have an abortion between 20**

and 24 weeks — survivors of rape, minors, and a married woman whose relationship status has altered during this period.

- The Supreme Court directed the constitution of a **medical board** to examine the woman (as per the provisions of the MTP Act) to determine if it was safe and not a risk to the life of the mother to terminate the pregnancy. If it is found to be safe, then she could go ahead and have an abortion.

Significance of the judgement:

- The Supreme Court's expansion of the law to include unmarried women as part of the MTP Act has given women in similar circumstances an option now to access healthcare services without having to take the time and resource consuming legal route to the top court every time.

***Nut Graf:** The Supreme Court's expansion of the law to include unmarried women as part of the MTP Act is in line with the 'object and spirit' of the MTP legislation to facilitate the access to quality healthcare services to those seeking to avail termination of pregnancy.*

Category: ECONOMY

1. What is the controversy over GST levies on food?

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Prelims: GST Council; Revenue Neutral Rate

Mains: Rationalization of GST system

Context:

- Starting from July 18, a 5% Goods and Services Tax (GST) would be levied on select food items and grains that are sold in a pre-packed, labelled form even if they are not branded.
- Up until now, these items were exempt from GST.

Details:

- The items on which the new tax would be applied include curd, lassi, buttermilk, puffed rice, wheat, pulses, oats, maize and flour.
- Notably, the affected food items, **will be exempt from GST when sold loose**. Also, pre-packed items weighing over 25 kg would not attract GST.
- The **GST Council** approved the 5% tax in June 2022. The recommendation for the new tax was given by the Group of Ministers (GoMs) set up by the GST council to consider steps to rationalise the tax rates and correct anomalies.

Rationale for the new tax:**Rationalization of GST system:**

- The new GST tax are part of a broader set of changes in the GST structure to **do away with tax exemptions as well as concessional tax rates.**
- The GST tax provision to tax only such items which are sold under a registered brand had triggered 'rampant misuse of tax exemption' by reputed manufacturers and brand owners leading to a gradual drop in GST revenues from this segment.

Raising tax revenue:

- The move is aimed at raising revenues from the GST.
- As against the envisaged '**revenue-neutral**' rate of **15.5%** at the launch of the GST system, the effective rate stood at a low 11.6%.

Concerns:

- The tax rise can have a marginal impact on India's **consumer inflation rate** which has been higher than the targeted 6% in recent times.
- As per available data, 85% of the country's consumers use such unbranded goods. Hence the price rise could **impact the consumption pattern** of this large segment of population.
- The fresh tax levies have attracted an outcry from traders as well who fear a drop in their profit margins.

***Nut Graf:** The new GST tax are part of a broader set of changes in the GST structure to do away with tax exemptions as well as concessional tax rates. This will help the administration increase GST revenues.*

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here today!!!

G. Tidbits**1. Any country can use CoWIN free**

- India has shared open source CoWIN platform allowing any interested country can avail itself the platform free of cost.
- The Government of India will also train the selected vendors by the country on CoWIN technology to customize it for their requirements.

- India had signed a MOU with Guyana for sharing CoWIN.
- This will help in achieving the Universal Vaccination against COVID-19 and further be repurposed for use in the healthcare sector.

Updated features of the platform:

- The platform is protected with state-of-the-art data security systems to safeguard user data against any possible intrusion.
- The number of slot searches per user is restricted to 15-20 on the portal to prevent bots, browser extensions or hack attempts.
- The API's shared to third parties by CoWIN are through a thorough scrutiny process, ensuring proper security and audit.

2. Bat habitats in South Western Ghats lie mainly outside protected areas.

- A recent study published in the 'Journal of Mammalogy' shows that more than half of habitats suitable for 37 species of bats in the Southern Western Ghats lie outside protected areas.
- Study involved Six major biodiversity hotspots — Periyar Tiger Reserve, Agasthyamalai, the Nilgiris, Anamalai, the Wayanad-Mudumalai complex and Brahmagiri.
- As per the study, the Southern Western Ghats was home to rare and endangered bat species such as Salim Ali's fruit bat (*Latidens salimalii*) and the Pomona roundleaf bat.
- The study can aid forest departments and local people come up with plans to protect bat species across the Western Ghats.
- Identifying these bat populations outside protected areas could help authorities spread awareness among human communities of the importance of bats to ecology and the environment.

Threats faced by Bats:

- Poaching for their meat, especially Salim Ali's fruit bat (*Latidens salimalii*)
- Habitat loss
- Stigma from local communities, especially after the pandemic.

3. Kerala researchers detect fungal disease in jackfruit

- Kerala Agricultural University has reported the emergence of a new fungal disease in jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*).
- It is the first time that rot by the fungus *Athelia rolfsii* is being reported in jackfruit in India.
- *Athelia rolfsii* is a major risk to various crops and, hence, the new development demands

immediate attention.

- As a soilborne fungal pathogen, *Athelia rolfsii* has a wide host range which attacks various commercially cultivated crops belonging to different families.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Chandra Shekhar Azad. (Level-Medium)

1. He actively participated in the Non-Cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi.
2. He formed the Hindustan Republican Association in 1923.
3. He was involved in the Kakori Train Robbery.

Which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation: Read more on [Chandra Shekhar Azad](#) and [HSRA](#)

Q2. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to fertilizer import and export by India? (Level-Medium)

1. With respect to Muriate of Potash (MoP) fertilizer, India is completely dependent on imports.
2. With respect to Urea fertilizer, India enjoys self-sufficiency and is able to meet all demand through domestic production.

Options:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Explanation:

- India has imported 7.74 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers from Russia in the first three months of

2022. Out of the 7.74 lakh MT, urea comprised 47,000 MT. Therefore, statement 02 is incorrect.

- For muriate of potash (MoP), India is completely dependent on imports. India imported 24.60 lakh MTs of MoP in 2020-21.
- Major sources of muriate of potash are Israel and Lithuania.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Anglo-Mysore wars of 18th century. (Level-Difficult)

1. The First Anglo-Mysore war was fought over the control of Northern Carnatic region and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Mangalore between the British and Hyder Ali.
2. Tipu Sultan died fighting in the Third Anglo-Mysore war.

Which of the following statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation: Read more on Anglo Mysore war- [First and Second war](#): [Third and Fourth War](#)

Q4. Consider the following pairs of Port and bordering water body. (Level-Difficult)

Port	Bordering water body
Odesa	Black sea
Rotterdam	North Sea
Hong Kong	East China Sea
Dakar	Indian Ocean

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

Options:

- a) One pair only
- b) Two pairs only (A)
- c) Three pairs only
- d) All the four pairs

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Pair 01 is correct, The Port of Odesa is the largest seaport of Ukraine and one of the largest ports in the Black sea basin.



Image Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

- Pair 02 is correct, The Port of Rotterdam is the largest Seaport in Europe and is located on the North sea.
- Pair 03 is incorrect, Hongkong port is located on South china Sea.



Image Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

- Pair 04 is incorrect, Dakar port is located on the North Atlantic ocean in the country of Senegal.



Image Source: CGTN, Africa

Q5. Consider the following statements: (Level-Medium)

1. The Environment Protection Act, 1986 empowers the Government of India to state the requirement of public participation in the process of environmental protection and the procedure and manner in which it is sought
2. lay down the standards for emission or discharge of environmental pollutants from various

sources

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Explanation: Read more on the [Environment Protection Act, 1986](#)

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Explain why pre-packaged and labelled food items been brought under the tax net now. (10 Marks, 150 words)(GS3 - Economy)
2. What is Jammu and Kashmir's Public Safety Act? Discuss the constitutional safeguards against preventive detention. (15 Marks, 250 words) (GS-2, Polity)