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# **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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**GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations**

**1. '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.

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**.

## 2. 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**.

### National Security Act (NSA)

It is a stringent law that allows preventive detention for months, if authorities are satisfied that a person is a threat to national security or law and order. It was promulgated in 1980, by the Indira Gandhi government and its purpose is “to **provide for preventive detention in certain cases and for matters connected therewith**”.

As per the National Security Act, the grounds for preventive detention of a person include:

- Acting in any manner prejudicial to the **defence of India**, the relations of India with foreign powers, or the **security of India**.
- Regulating the continued presence of any foreigner in India or with a view to making arrangements for his expulsion from India.
- Preventing them from acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State or from acting in any manner prejudicial to the **maintenance of public**

order or from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community it is necessary so to do.

The order can be issued by the **District Magistrate or a Commissioner of Police** under their respective jurisdictions, but the detention should be reported to the State Government along with the grounds on which the order has been made.

### How does it work?

- Under the National Security Act, an **individual can be detained without a charge for up to 12 months**; the state government needs to be intimated that a person has been detained under the NSA.
- A person detained under the National Security Act **can be held for 10 days without being told the charges against them**.
- The **detained person can appeal before a high court advisory board** but they are not allowed a lawyer during the trial.

### Concerns

- One must note that preventive detention was a **tactic of the colonial order to suppress the activities of nationalists fighting for freedom**.
- A detainee under preventive **detention doesn't enjoy any of the personal liberties granted by Articles 19 or 21** of the Indian Constitution.
- In the normal course, if a person is arrested, he or she is guaranteed certain basic rights.
  - These include the right to be informed of the reason for the arrest. **Section 50 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.PC)** mandates that the person arrested has to be informed of the grounds of arrest, and the right to bail.
  - **Sections 56 and 76 of the Cr. PC** also provides that a person has to be produced before a court within 24 hours of arrest.
  - Additionally, **Article 22(1) of the Constitution says an arrested person cannot be denied the right to consult**, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice. But none of these rights are available to a person detained under the NSA.
- The Act crushes dissenting voices and targets “political activists and trade unionists”.
- Even when providing the grounds for arrest, the **government can withhold information** which it considers to be against the public interest to disclose.
- It is being used by our **democratic government against the people who fight for their right to live a life free from pollution**, e.g.: anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin.

### Conclusion

- Justice D.Y. Chandrachud of the Supreme Court had said that protest and criticism directed at government policy do not amount to being anti-national, officials should pause before they are seen as enablers of the excesses of an authoritarian dispensation.
- Thus, NSA should not be invoked in cases where sections of the IPC would suffice and given the bias in the political executive, the Supreme Court must step in and issue guidelines to check the NSA's misuse.

### **3. 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.
- 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.

## GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

### 4. 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**.



## 5. 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**.

### 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.

## 6. 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**.

## 7. 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.

## THE INDIAN EXPRESS

### GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

#### 1. Statehood Day of Goa

##### Why in News

On the **Statehood Day of Goa (30<sup>th</sup> May)**, the Prime Minister greeted the people of the state.

##### Key Points

- **About:**
  - Goa is located on the **southwestern coast of India** within the **region known as the Konkan**, and geographically **separated from the Deccan highlands by the Western Ghats**.
- **Capital:**
  - Panji.
- **Official Language:**
  - Konkani which is one of the 22 languages from the **Eight Schedule**.

##### □ **Borders:**

- It is surrounded by **Maharashtra** to the north and **Karnataka** to the east and south, with the **Arabian Sea** forming its western coast.

##### □ **History:**

- As India gained independence on **15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947**, it requested the Portugese to cede their territories. However, Portuguese refused.
- In 1961, Indian Government launched **Operation Vijay** and **annexed Daman and Diu islands and Goa** with the Indian mainland.
  - **Goa Liberation Day** is observed on **19<sup>th</sup> December** every year in India.

- It can be noted that the **Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to India (1498)** and were also the **last to leave this land (1961)**.
- On **30<sup>th</sup> May, 1987, the territory was split and Goa was formed**. Daman and Diu remained Union Territory.

#### □ **Geography:**

- The **highest point of Goa is Sonsogor**.
- Goa's seven **major rivers are the Zuari, Mandovi, Terekhol, Chapora, Galgibag, Kumbarjua canal, Talpona and the Sal**.
- Most of Goa's **soil cover is made up of laterites**.

#### □ **Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks:**

- Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary
- **Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary**
- **Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary**
- Mollem National Park

## **2. Centre Extends Powers Related to Citizenship Application**

### **Why in News**

Recently, the Central Government issued a notification **granting powers related to citizenship applications** under existing rules to **authorities of five states**.

- The order has been **issued under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship Rules, 2009** and not under the **Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019** since its rules have not yet been framed.

### **Key Points**

- **The Notification:**
  - In accordance with **section 16 of the Citizenship Act, 1955** the central government directed that powers exercisable by it **for registration as a citizen of India, or for grant of certificate of naturalisation** shall also be exercisable by the collector (District Magistrate), within whose jurisdiction the applicant is ordinarily resident.

- **Section 16 of the Citizenship Act 1955: The Central Government may, by order, direct that any power which is conferred on it can be exercisable also by such officer or authority as may be so specified.**
- **Exceptions:** However powers mentioned in **section 10** (certificate of registration to be granted to persons registered) and **section 18** (form of certificate of naturalisation) can be **exercised by the central government only.**
- It also granted **similar powers to the Home Secretaries of Haryana and Punjab, except for Faridabad and Jalandhar.**
- **States and Districts:**
  - Powers were extended to **13 districts office states which are:**
    - **Gujarat-** Morbi, Rajkot, Patan and Vadodara.
    - **Chhattisgarh-** Durg and Balodabazar.
    - **Rajasthan-** Jalore, Udaipur, Pali, Barmer and Sirohi.
    - **Haryana-** Faridabad.
    - **Punjab-** Jalandhar.
- **Extended Powers:**
  - It includes power to **accept, verify and approve citizenship applications** from members of **minority communities hailing from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.**
  - It lists **Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians** as the **communities that will be covered.**
    - **In 2018, the Government had granted similar powers to Collectors and Home Secretaries of states such as Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi with regard to certain districts.**

## Citizenship

- **About:**
  - Citizenship signifies the **relationship between individual and state.**
  - Like any other modern state, India has two kinds of people – **citizens and aliens.**
    - **Citizens are full members of the Indian State** and owe allegiance to it. They enjoy all civil and political rights.
  - Citizenship is an **idea of exclusion as it excludes non-citizens.**
  - There are two well-known principles for the grant of citizenship:
    - While **'jus soli'** confers citizenship on the **basis of place of birth**, **'jus sanguinis'** gives recognition to blood ties.
      - From the time of the **Motilal Nehru Committee (1928)**, the **Indian leadership was in favour of the enlightened concept of jus soli.**

- The racial idea of *jus sanguinis* was also rejected by the Constituent Assembly as it was against the Indian ethos.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
  - Citizenship is **listed in the Union List** under the Constitution and thus is under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament.
  - The Constitution does not define the term 'citizen' but **details of various categories of persons who are entitled to citizenship** are given in **Part 2 (Articles 5 to 11)**.
    - Unlike other provisions of the Constitution, which came into being on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1950, **these articles were enforced on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1949** itself, when the Constitution was adopted.

### Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Major Provisions)

- **Citizenship on the basis of religion:**
  - The Bill amends the Act to provide that the **Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians** from **Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan**, who entered India on or before **31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014**, will not be treated as illegal migrants.
- **Non - Muslim Communities Excluded:**
  - Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian. This implies that **migrants, who identify themselves with any group or community other than those mentioned** here, from the above mentioned countries **won't be eligible for citizenship**.
- **Exceptions:**
  - The provisions on citizenship for illegal migrants will not apply to two categories - states protected by the '**Inner Line**', and areas covered under the **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution**.
    - **Inner Line Permit (ILP):** This is a **special permit that citizens from other parts of India require to enter a state** protected by the ILP regime. Without an ILP granted by the state government, an Indian from another state cannot visit a state that is under the ILP regime.
    - **Sixth Schedule:** The **Sixth Schedule** relates to special provisions in administration of certain Northeastern states (**Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura**). It provides **special powers for Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in these states**.
- **Citizenship by Naturalization:**
  - Under The Citizenship Act, 1955, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalisation is that the **applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, as well as for 11 of the previous 14 years**.

- The amendment relaxes the second requirement from 11 years to 5 years as a specific condition for applicants belonging to the specified six religions, and the above-mentioned three countries.
- **Cancellation of registration of OCIs:**
  - The Act provides that the central government may cancel the registration of **Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)** on certain grounds which are:
    - If the OCI has **registered through fraud.**
    - If, within five years of registration, the **OCI has been sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more.**
    - If it becomes necessary **in the interest of sovereignty and security of India.**
    - If the OCI has **violated the provisions of the Act** or of any other law as notified by the central government.
  - However the orders for cancellation of **OCI should not be passed till the OCI cardholder is given an opportunity to be heard.**

## **GS 3 :Economy, Science and Technology,Environment**

### **3. OPV Sajag**

#### **Why in News**

Recently, the **Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Sajag** got commissioned into the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**.

#### **Key Points**

- **About Sajag:**
  - It is **third out of five OPV** indigenously designed and built by the Goa Shipyard Limited. It is built under the **Make in India** policy.
    - Other four OPVs are Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) **Saksham, ICGS Sachet, ICGS Sujeet, and ICGS Sarthak.**
  - It is **fitted with advanced technology equipment, weapons and sensors** capable of carrying a twin engine helicopter and four high speed boats.
    - OPVs are **long-range surface ships** capable of coastal and offshore patrolling, policing maritime zones, control &

- surveillance, anti-smuggling & anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles.
- It will **help to manage greater responsibilities** in the years to come and will strengthen ICGs concurrent **multiple operations' capability** towards ensuring safe, secure and clean seas as also **responding promptly to maritime emergencies in neighbourhood.**
  - **Indian Coast Guard:**
    - **About:**
      - It is an **Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency** under the Ministry of Defence.
      - It has a wide range of task capabilities for both surface and air operations. **It is one of the largest coast guards in the world.**
    - **Establishment:**
      - It was established on **18<sup>th</sup> August 1978** by the Coast Guard Act, 1978. It performs non-military functions.
      - The concept of forming ICG came into being after the **1971 war** the blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was **conceived by the visionary Rustamji Committee.**
    - **Head and Headquarter:**
      - The organization is headed by the **Director General Indian Coast Guard (DGICG)** exercising his overall command and superintendence from the **Coast Guard Headquarters (CGHQ)** located at **New Delhi.**
    - **Jurisdiction:**
      - It has jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India including **contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.**
    - **Function:**
      - Responsible for **marine environment protection** in maritime zones of India.
      - Acts as a **coordinating authority for responding to oil spills** in Indian waters.
      - Protects India's **maritime interests** and enforces its **maritime law.**

#### 4. Launching Baby Squids and Tardigrades into Space

##### Why in News

NASA will send **baby squids** and **tardigrades (also called water bears)** to the **International Space Station** for conducting various scientific studies.



## Key Points

- **The Study:** These animals are part of **two separate scientific studies**.
  - **Behavior of Tardigrades (water bears) in a spaceflight environment.**
    - Tardigrades can adapt to extreme conditions on Earth, including high pressure, temperature and radiation.
  - **Impact of microgravity conditions** on the relationship between bobtail squids and beneficial microbes.
    - The squids are a part of the **UMAMI (Understanding of Microgravity on Animal-Microbe Interactions)** study which examines the effects of spaceflight on interactions between beneficial microbes and their animal hosts.
- **Importance of the Study:**
  - **Host-microbe Relationship:**
    - **On Earth**, it will help to find ways to **protect and even enhance the complex relationship between animals and beneficial microbes**, ensuring better human health and well being.
    - **In space**, the findings will help space agencies **develop better measures to protect astronauts from adverse host-microbe alterations** on long-duration missions.
  - **Longer Spaceflights:**
    - **The study on Tardigrades** will allow researchers to study their hardiness close up, and possibly identify the genes that allow them to become so resilient. This will help in safer and longer spaceflights.
    - **Similarly, a recent research in zebrafish** has demonstrated how **induced hibernation (torpor)** may protect humans from the elements of space, especially radiation, during space flight.

## 5. International Space Station

- ISS is a **habitable artificial satellite** - the single largest man-made structure in low earth orbit. Its first component was launched into orbit in 1998.
- It circles the Earth in roughly 92 minutes and completes 15.5 orbits per day.
- The ISS programme is a **joint project between five participating space agencies:** NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada) but its ownership and use has been established by intergovernmental treaties and agreements.
- It serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which crew members conduct experiments in biology, human biology, physics, astronomy, meteorology, and other fields.
- Continuous presence at ISS has resulted in the longest continuous human presence in low earth orbit.

- It is **expected to operate until 2030**.
- Recently, China **launched an unmanned module of its permanent space station** that it plans to complete by the end of 2022.
  - The module, named "**Tianhe**", or "**Harmony of the Heavens**", was launched on the **Long March 5B**, China's largest carrier rocket.
- India has also set its eye on **building its own space station in low earth orbit** to conduct microgravity experiments in space in 5 to 7 years.

## 6. Edible oil prices rise sharply

### In news

- Edible oil prices have risen sharply in recent months.

### Key takeaways

- Increase in prices was observed in six edible oils – groundnut oil, mustard oil, vanaspati, soya oil, sunflower oil and palm oil.
- With rising incomes and changing food habits, consumption of edible oils has been rising over the years.
- One main reason for increase in prices is the shift in usage of edible oils from food to biofuel.
- **Other reasons are:** More buying by China, labour issues in Malaysia, Impact of laNina on palm and soya producing areas and imposition of export duty on crude palm oil in Indonesia and Malaysia
- To immediately reduce the prices, the import duty must be reduced which has increased because of imposition of cess after the budget.

### Important value additions

- The major sources of these imports are Argentina and Brazil for soybean oil; Indonesia and Malaysia palm oil; and Ukraine and Argentina again for sunflower oil.
- The domestic demand of edible oil is around 24 Million Tonnes (MT) while India produces only 11 Mt.
- Thus, 13 MT of edible oils is imported.
- While mustard oil is consumed mostly in rural areas, the share of refined oils – sunflower oil and soybean oil – is higher in urban areas.

**Prelims Practice Questions**

**1. YUVA, recently seen in news, is:**

- a. a skill development program for youth below the age of 30
- b. an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors
- c. a National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education
- d. none of the Above

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) is an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors (below 30 years of age) in order to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.
- It was launched by the Department of Higher Education as a scheme Mentoring Young Authors.
- The National Book Trust, India under the Ministry of Education is the Implementing Agency.

**2. Consider the following:**

1. Batagur baska
2. Irrawaddy dolphins
3. Gharial

**Which of the above species is/are Critically Endangered?**

- a. Only 1
- b. 1 & 2
- c. 1 & 3
- d. 2 & 3

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

IUCN classification:

- Batagur baska – Critically Endangered
- Irrawaddy dolphins – Endangered
- Gharial – Critically Endangered

**3. Which of the following is/are the indicator/indicators used by IFPRI to compute the Global Hunger Index Report?**

1. Undernourishment
2. Child stunting
3. Child mortality

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

Global Health Index (GHI) ranks countries on a 100 point scale, 0 representing zero/no hunger. The GHI scores are based on four indicators.

1. Undernourishment: the share of the population whose caloric intake is insufficient.
2. Child Stunting: the share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age.
3. Child Wasting: the share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height.
4. Child Mortality: the mortality rate of children under the age of five (a reflection of the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments).

Taken together, the component indicators reflect deficiencies in calories as well as in micronutrients. Thus, the GHI reflects both aspects of hunger (undernutrition and malnutrition).

**4. Which of the following species are most likely to be seen at the Sundarbans?**

1. Indian python
2. Irrawaddy dolphin
3. Hangul
4. Batagur baska

**Select the correct option from below:**

- a. 1 & 2
- b. 1, 2 & 3
- c. 2 & 4
- d. 1, 2 & 4

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Hangul is also known as the Kashmir stag. It is native to Kashmir and is found in dense riverine forests in the high valleys and mountains of the Kashmir Valley and northern Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh.
- The Sundarbans forest is among the largest mangrove forest ecosystem in the world. It is home to Indian python, Batagur baska (Northern river terrapin-a species of riverine turtle), Irrawaddy dolphins, Estuarine Crocodile and Royal Bengal Tiger among the others.

**5. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana , consider the following statements:**

1. It is being implemented only in the most backward districts under the Aspirational Districts' Programme.
2. It complements the target 3.1 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : B

Explanation

- Recently, the government's maternity benefit scheme, or **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**, has crossed 1.75 crore eligible women till the financial year 2020.
- PMMVY is a maternity benefit programme being implemented **in all districts of the country** with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2017. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The **target 3.1 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** set by the United Nations aims at **reducing the global maternal mortality ratio** to less than 70 per 1,00,000 live births. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

**6. With reference to Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), consider the following statements:**

1. It is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Its goal is to make the police functioning citizen friendly and more transparent.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : C

Explanation

- **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS)** is a **Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)** of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
  - Approx. 14,000 Police Stations throughout the country have been proposed to be automated besides 6000 higher offices in the police hierarchy. It was approved in 2009. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Its main objective is to make the **Police functioning citizen friendly and more transparent by automating the functioning of Police Stations.**
  - Improve delivery of citizen-centric services through effective usage of ICT.

- Provide the Investigating Officers of the Civil Police with tools, technology and information to facilitate investigation of crime and detection of criminals. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

### **Mains Practice Questions**

**1. Though food wastage is a global problem, India stands a chance to convert this into an opportunity, if it can address it properly. Comment.**

#### **Approach**

- Start the answer by briefly mentioning the problem of food wastage.
- Discuss the main challenge of food wastage and steps to address it.
- Conclude Suitably.

**2. The Covid-19 pandemic has revived the debate on the government's policy of minimising presence of PSEs' and creating new investment space for the private sector. Discuss.**

#### **Approach**

- Start the answer by briefly discussing the context of the role played by the public sector enterprises during the pandemic.
- Discuss the relevance of PSEs in present times.
- Conclude Suitably.