

Testwale Current Affairs PDF

Current Affairs search results for tag: national-news

1. No one can be forced to get vaccinated: SC (May 3, 2022)

The Supreme Court said that no person can be compelled to vaccinate against COVID-19, but it also said that "so long as there is a danger of spreading the disease, the rights of the people can be restricted in the wider public interest.

Right not to get vaccinated

- The bench upheld a person's right to physical integrity and personal autonomy in the light of vaccines and other public health measures.
- Physical integrity is protected under Article 21 (right to life) of the Constitution and no person can be forced to vaccinate.
- The court struck a balance between the individual's right to bodily integrity and denial of treatment with the government's concern for public health.

• Vaccine Hesitancy

- People's reluctance to receive safe and recommended available vaccines is known as 'vaccine hesitancy'.
- There are five main reasons for vaccine hesitation-

1. Confidence
2. Complacency
3. Convenience (or constraints)
4. Risk calculation
5. Collective responsibility

• What was challenged in the petition?

- Dr Jacob Pulial, a former member of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), had filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the mandatory requirement of the vaccine.
- The petition has also sought to make public the clinical data of vaccination.
- The petition said that the Centre says that getting the vaccine is voluntary, but the states have made it mandatory.

• Instructions to the central government

- The Supreme Court directed the Central Government to make public the reports received from the public and doctors regarding the incidence of side effects of vaccines without compromising on the confidentiality of personal data.

2. The debate on the national language (May 3, 2022)

A remark by a Hindi actor to the effect that Hindi is the national language of India has recently sparked controversy over the language's status under the Constitution.

What is the status of Hindi in the constitution?

- Under Article 343 of the Constitution, the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.
- The international form of Indian numerals will be used for official purposes.
- **Constituent Assembly debate**
- The Constituent Assembly was divided on this question.
- The supporters of Hindi were insisting that English is the language of slavery and it should be abolished at the earliest.
- The opponents were against the abolition of English as they feared that Hindi might dominate in areas where Hindi is not spoken.
- There was a demand to make Sanskrit the official language, while some argued in favour of 'Hindustani'.
- It was decided that the Constitution would talk only of 'Official Language'.
- English will continue to be used for a period of 15 years.
- The Constitution states that after 15 years, Parliament may by law decide on the use of English and as Devanagari for specified purposes.

What is the Eighth Schedule?

- The Eighth Schedule lists the languages of the country.
- Initially, there were 14 languages in the schedule, but now there are 22 languages.
- There is no description of the type of languages to be included in the Eighth Schedule.
- The Official Languages Act, 1963 was passed in anticipation of the end of the 15-year period during which the Constitution originally permitted the use of English for official purposes.

The three language formula

- Since the 1960s, the Centre's education policy documents talk of teaching three languages - Hindi, English and a regional language in Hindi-speaking states, and Hindi, English and an official regional language in other states.
- In practice, only a few states teach both their major language and Hindi in addition to English.
- In states where Hindi is the official language, third language is rarely taught as a compulsory subject.

- Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed the three-language formula and has stuck to teaching Tamil and English.

3. PM Modi, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz co-chair sixth edition of IGC in Berlin (May 3, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz co-chaired the 6th edition of the India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations-IGC in Berlin.

- The two leaders highlighted key aspects of bilateral relations as well as shared perspectives on regional and global issues.
- PM Modi emphasised that the India-Germany partnership can serve as an example of success in a complex world.
- He also invited German participation in India's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- It was the prime minister's first IGC with Chancellor Scholz and also the first government-to-government consultation of the new German government, which took office in December last year.
- The biennial IGC is a unique dialogue format with the participation of several ministers from both sides.
- Earlier, Prime Minister Modi held bilateral discussions with the German Chancellor.
- The two leaders reviewed the full range of bilateral relations between India and Germany, including promoting trade as well as cultural ties.

4. Election Commission inaugurates integrated election complex (May 2, 2022)

The Chief Election Commissioner of India inaugurated the Integrated Election Complex in Delhi recently.

- **About Integrated Election Complex**
 - It has been constructed for storage and management of EVMs and VVPATs of NCT Delhi.
 - It has been built by the Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi and Delhi Tourism.
 - This is a milestone for the Election Commission of India.
 - The complex has been conceptualised with all state-of-the-art facilities and administrative security protocols for storage, security and movement of EVMs.
 - It has comprehensive facilities for first level verification of EVMs and VVPATs as per the guidelines of the Election Commission.
- **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)**
 - EVMs have been used in all elections since 2004.
 - EVMs cannot be tampered.

- It provides accurate and timely results establishing their reliability as they were first put into use on pilot basis 4 decades back.
- The VVPAT audit trail initiated since the 2019 General Elections has further established the credibility of EVMs and no mismatch has been found in the counting of votes cast in the EVMs and VVPAT slips.

5. Governments ignoring court orders: CJI (May 2, 2022)

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana said non-functioning of various organs of the executive and ambiguity in laws are adding to the litigation burden on the judiciary.

- Contempt petitions are a new category of burden on courts, which are a direct result of disobedience by governments.
- Such actions show the sheer disobedience of the governments towards judicial pronouncements.
- The tendency to delegate the responsibility of decision making to the courts is clearly visible.
- The ambiguity of the legislature, lack of foresight, and public consultation before enacting a law have led to a docket explosion.

• What is Contempt of the Court?

- Contempt of court is the offence of being disobedient to or disrespectful toward a court of law and its officers.
- There are two categories of contempt-

1. Disrespecting the legal authorities in the courtroom.
2. Willfully failing to comply with a court order.

- Article 129 of the Constitution empowered the Supreme Court to punish for contempt of itself.
- Article 215 confers similar power on High Courts.
- The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, gives statutory support to this idea.

6. Bihar CM inaugurates India's first ethanol plant in Purnia (May 2, 2022)

The country's first ethanol plant operated from coarse grains was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar on 30 April 2022 in Purnia district of Bihar.

- This is the first plant set up after the Central Government approved the Ethanol Production and Promotion Policy-2021 of the Government of Bihar.
- Ethanol will be manufactured from maize and broken rice in the plant, which will benefit more than 10000 farmers of Bihar in the coming time.

- The production capacity of the Greenfield Grain Based Ethanol Plant is 65 thousand litres per day.
- The plant has been designed keeping in mind the environment friendly so as to ensure zero liquid discharge and cause less damage to the environment.
- This plant has been set up at a cost of one hundred and five crores.
- Production of ethanol will reduce the cost of petrol in the state and create new employment opportunities.
- **About ethanol-**
- Ethanol is a kind of alcohol, it is also called ethyl alcohol.
- It can be used as fuel in vehicles by mixing it with petrol.
- After sugarcane, the central government is now focusing on preparing ethanol from rice.
- By producing ethanol, farmers can make their economic condition better by earning good profits.
- Ethanol is mainly produced from the sugarcane crop, but it can also be prepared from different types of sugar crops.

7. PM participates in unveiling of Sardar Patel's statue in Canada (May 2, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended a ceremony in Markham, Canada on May 1, where a statue of Sardar Patel was unveiled at the Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre.

- PM Modi lauded the unveiling of the statue as a great initiative by the diaspora to deepen cultural ties with India.
- He said that the statue of Sardar Patel would not only strengthen the cultural values but would also become a symbol of relations between the two countries.
- He said, India is not only a nation, but also an idea and culture.
- He said that India is that high level idea which talks of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.
- **India-Canada relation**
- India-Canada bilateral relationship is based on the shared values of democracy, pluralism, and extended economic engagement.
- Relations between the two countries are based on shared democratic values, the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature of the two societies, and people-to-people ties.
- The visit of the Prime Minister of India to Canada in 2015 has transformed the bilateral relationship into a strategic partnership.
- Both the countries pursue bilateral relations through the following dialogue mechanisms-

1. Joint Working Group on Higher Education(Since 2019)
 2. Ministerial Level – Strategic, Trade and Energy Dialogue
 3. Other sector specific joint working groups
 4. Joint Committee Meeting on Civil Nuclear cooperation
 5. India-Canada Strategic Dialogue by the External Affairs Ministers of both nations
- Bilateral trade between India and Canada is worth US\$ 5 billion.
 - More than 400 Canadian companies have a presence in India, and over 1,000 companies are actively trading in the Indian market.
 - India exports pharma, iron and steel, chemicals, gems and jewellery, nuclear reactors and boilers to Canada.
 - Imports include minerals, ores, vegetables, fertiliser, paper and pulp.

8. Sheikh Hasina offered Chittagong port to India (May 2, 2022)

In a major development in India-Bangladesh ties, India has now gained significant access to the Chittagong port after it was offered to India by Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

About Chittagong Port

- The Chittagong Port is the major seaport of Bangladesh.
- It is situated in the port city of Chittagong and on the banks of river Karnaphuli.
- Due to the sea port's proximity to the North-East Indian states, it has the potential to boost economic activity in the North-East Indian states, providing access to global shipping lanes.
- In the year 2010, India and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to allow the use of Chittagong and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India.
- In 2018, the Bangladesh cabinet approved a proposed agreement with New Delhi to allow the use of the two ports for the transport of goods.
- The port handles eighty percent of Bangladesh's export-import trade, and is used for transshipment by Bhutan, Nepal and India.
- Chittagong port is being developed and modernised with Chinese investment.
- **Benefits for India**
- An additional connectivity route which is economical and environment friendly.
- States like Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura get access to a port for transportation of goods.

- Promote multi-modal connectivity between India and Bangladesh.
- Important route for India to reach Southeast Asia, East Asia and beyond.

9. Pakistan gets \$8 billion in financial support from Saudi Arabia (May 2, 2022)

Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide a relief package of about 8 billion US dollars to Pakistan.

- This package is expected to give a big help to Pakistan in recovering its dwindling foreign exchange reserves and troubled economy.
- At present, Pakistan is beset with serious financial challenges due to high rate of inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves, severe current account deficit and weakening of its currency.
- The agreement was signed during the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia.
- It provides for funding for oil, additional funds through deposits or succulents, and advances of \$4.2 billion in facilities.
- Pakistan had proposed to increase the funding for oil from \$ 1.2 billion to \$ 2.4 billion, which Saudi Arabia accepted.
- It was also agreed that the existing deposits of \$3 billion would be rolled over for an extended period up to June 2023.

• Other Financial support of UAE to Pakistan

- Saudi Arabia provided a \$3 billion deposit to the State Bank of Pakistan in December 2021.
- The Saudi oil facility became operational in March 2022, receiving \$100 million for Pakistan to purchase oil.
- This oil-rich Gulf country had given a package of \$ 7.5 billion to Pakistan during the last term of the PML-N government (2013-18).
- In the PTI-led government headed by former prime minister Imran Khan, Saudi Arabia provided a \$4.2 billion package, including a \$3 billion deposit and a \$1.2 billion oil facility for one year, and linked it to the IMF program
- Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have depleted by \$6 billion in the last six to seven weeks and nosedived to \$10.5 billion.
- Pakistan needs financial assistance of \$ 9-12 billion by June 2022 to prevent depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

10. FDA proposes ban on menthol cigarettes, flavoured cigars (April 30, 2022)

The US Food and Drug Administration issued a long-awaited proposal to ban menthol cigarettes and flavoured cigars.

- The proposal aims to ban menthol as a specific flavouring in cigarettes and all characteristic flavours in cigars.
- The proposed rule will help prevent children from becoming the next generation of smokers and help in quitting adult smoking addiction.
- The proposed rule will help prevent children from becoming the next generation of smokers and help in quitting adult smoking addiction.
- Brazil was the first country in the world to ban menthol cigarettes in 2012.
- In 2019, the Government of India banned electronic cigarettes and different states have their own rules for banning the consumption of hookah in public places.

- **Tobacco Consumption in India**

- As per the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, India has the second largest number (268 million) of tobacco users in the world.
- Every year 1.3 million people in India die due to tobacco-related diseases.
- One million deaths are caused by smoking.
- In India, about 270 million people above 15 years of age and 8.5% of school children in the age group of 13-15 years use tobacco in some form or the other.
- Tobacco consumption incurs an economic burden of Rs 1,77,340 crore annually in India.
- About 27 percent of cancers in India are caused by tobacco use.