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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SOURCES



Table of Contents

1. Supreme Court limits power of ED to arrest PMLA accused.....	2
2. State cannot acquire property without proper procedure: SC.....	2
3. Xi, Putin and the World.....	3
4. The use of AI in drug development.....	5
5. Should reservation in jobs only be in proportion to the population?.....	6
6. Tirupati's annual folk festival draws large number of devotees despite delayed start.....	7
7. Violence rages in New Caledonia as France rushes security forces to islands.....	7
8. U.S. proposes reclassifying marijuana as a low-risk drug.....	8
9. Insurance Surety Bonds.....	8
10. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) - Quarterly Bulletin (January-March 2024).....	9
Daily Quiz.....	10



GS II

1. Supreme Court limits power of ED to arrest PMLA accused

Source: The Hindu, Page 1

Prelims: About ED, PMLA

Mains: Separation of Powers between various organs

News: The Supreme Court gave a fillip to the right to personal liberty by holding that a person summoned by a designated special court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), is presumed to be not in custody and need not apply for bail.

Major Takeaways

- The judgement limits the power of arrest by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) after a special court takes cognisance of a case.
- However, the special court can direct the accused to furnish bonds in terms of Section 88 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- The twin conditions of bail under Section 45 of the PMLA pose stringent thresholds for an accused. One, the person has to prove in court that he or she is prima facie innocent of the offence. Secondly, the accused should be able to convince the judge he would not commit any offence while on bail. The burden of proof is entirely on the incarcerated accused.
- Spelling further relief, the judgement said that an accused, who appears in the special court, could be exempted from personal appearance in the future. On the other hand, if an accused does not appear after a summons is served, the special court could issue a bailable warrant followed by a non bailable one.

About Prevention of Money Laundering Act

- The PMLA is the cornerstone of India's legal structure designed to prevent money laundering.
- Three key goals of the Act are to prevent and control money laundering, confiscate and seize property acquired through money laundering, and address any other issues related to money laundering in India. The Act aims to combat money laundering in India.
- Under pertinent Act sections, the Director, FIU-IND, and Director (Enforcement) have been granted exclusive and concurrent authority to carry out Act requirements.
- PMLA and the Rules notified there under came into force with effect from July 1, 2005.

2. State cannot acquire property without proper procedure: SC

Source: The Hindu, Page 4

Prelims: Article 300A

Mains: Separation of Powers between various organs

Easing conditions

The major takeaways from the Supreme Court verdict on the Prevention of Money Laundering Act are:



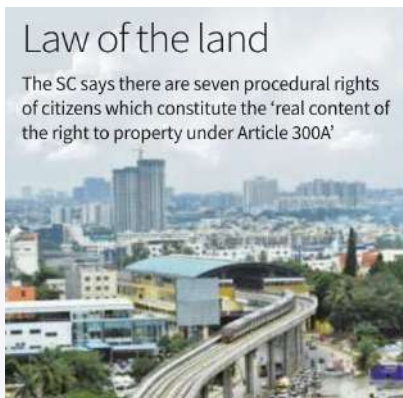
- An accused is presumed to be not in custody if he appears in court on summons
- The court can direct the accused to furnish bonds in terms of Section 88 of the Code of Criminal Procedure
- The ED has to apply to a special court for custody, giving specific reasons



News: The Supreme Court ruled that compulsory property acquisition without mandatory procedures and compensation is unconstitutional.

Major Takeaways

- The right to property is protected as a constitutional right and has even been interpreted to be a human right.
- The judgement noted that though the 44th Constitutional Amendment omitted the right to property as a fundamental right, Article 300A, which was inserted into the Constitution, provided that “no person shall be deprived of his property, save by authority of law”.
- A person’s rights, even the history of liberty, have been safeguarded through the prescription and observance of mandatory procedures and processes of law. Procedure is an integral part of the “authority of law” in Article 300A.
- The court laid down seven basic procedural rights of private citizens which constitute the “real content of the right to property under Article 300A” that the state should respect before depriving them of their private property.



1. The right to notice or the duty of the state to inform a person that it intends to acquire his or her property
2. The right of the citizen to be heard or the duty of the state to hear the objections to the acquisition
3. The right of the citizen to a reasoned decision or the duty of the state to inform the person of its decision to acquire a property
4. The duty of the state to demonstrate that the acquisition is exclusively for public purpose
5. The right of the citizen to fair compensation
6. The duty of the state to conduct the process of acquisition efficiently and within prescribed timelines
7. The right of conclusion of the proceedings

3. Xi, Putin and the World

Source: IE, Page 14

Prelims: China-Russia Map

Mains: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India’s interests

News: Putin is on his 19th visit to China since becoming Russia's leader.

Sino-Russian Relationships

- The relationship between China and the Soviet Union did not begin well.
- During the Cold War, China and the USSR were rivals, competing for control of the global communist movement. Tensions between the countries rose dangerously in the early 1960s, and they fought a brief border war in 1969. The relationship began to improve after the death of Mao in 1976, but remained frosty right until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- In the post Cold War era, economic relations have formed the "new strategic basis" for Sino-Russian relations. China became Russia's biggest trading partner, and the largest Asian investor in Russia. China views Russia as a



powerhouse of raw material and a valuable market for its consumer goods.

- The West's hostile approach towards Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 brought Moscow closer to Beijing.

Relation during War

- China and Russia signed a "no-limits" strategic partnership only days before Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. More than two years later, Russia controls large swathes of Ukrainian territory.
- Russian imports of machine tools, computer chips, and other dual-use items from China have increased significantly. The sales of Chinese logistics equipment like lorries (to transport troops) and excavators (to dig trenches) to Russia have increased by four to seven times since the war began.
- The West expects Xi to use his leverage with Putin to end the war. While signing a statement deepening the strategic relationship with Russia, Xi said on Thursday that both sides agreed that a political settlement to the Ukraine crisis was the "right direction".

Concerns for India

- About 60-70% of Indian defence supplies come from Russia, and New Delhi needs regular and reliable supplies especially at a time when Indian and Chinese soldiers are locked in a standoff at the border for the last four years.
- Many western analysts have cautioned India about a scenario in which Russia becomes a "junior partner" of China. At the same time, India would not want the Russian defence industry to suffer as a result of western sanctions - at least in the short-to-medium term.



GS III

4. The use of AI in drug development

Source: The Hindu, Page 10

Prelims: Drug Making Procedure

Mains: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-technology, Bio-technology

News: Google recently unveiled AlphaFold 3.

Drug Making Process

- Drug development begins by identifying and validating a target (usually a protein).
- Druggable proteins have ideal docking sites for drugs.
- Target proteins are identified using computer models.
- This method avoids time-consuming lab experiments.
- Suitable targets and drugs move to pre-clinical testing on cells and animals.
- Clinical phase tests drugs on a small number of human patients for safety and efficacy.
- Successful drugs undergo regulatory approval and marketing.

Use of AI in Drug Making

- AI revolutionises target discovery and drug-target interaction.
- AI tools reduce time, increase prediction accuracy, and save money.
- AlphaFold and RoseTTAFold are key AI-based prediction tools Developed by DeepMind (Google) and University of Washington respectively.
- Tools use deep neural networks to determine 3D protein structures.
- New versions: AlphaFold 3 and RoseTTAFold All-Atom. These upgraded tools predict interactions of proteins, DNA, RNA, and small molecules. They also utilise generative diffusion-based architectures.
- AlphaFold 3 predicted 76% of interactions accurately, RoseTTAFold All-Atom 40%.

Drawbacks

- Accuracy: Only up to 80% accuracy in predicting interactions; lower for protein-RNA interactions.
- Limited Scope: Aids only in target discovery and drug-target interaction phases.
- Development Phases: Must still undergo pre-clinical and clinical phases with uncertain success.
- Model Hallucinations: Insufficient training data can cause incorrect predictions.
- Restricted Access: AlphaFold 3 code not released, limiting verification and broad use.

Indian Story

- India lacks sufficient computing infrastructure and skilled AI scientists. E.g. GPU chips are expensive, and with newer and faster ones being produced by hardware makers every year, they have a quick expiration date.
- This hinders India's first-mover advantage in AI drug development.
- India has a strong background in structural biology.
- Increasing pharmaceutical organisations in India can drive AI application in drug discovery and testing.

Ways in Which AI Transforms Drug Discovery



Editorials, Opinions and Ideas

5. Should reservation in jobs only be in proportion to the population?

Source: The Hindu, Page 9

The article discusses the recent debate on “Reservation in jobs on the basis of population proportion”. It becomes important for your General Studies Paper II syllabus with reference to “Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections”.

Historical Context

- It is the British who introduced proportionate representation to certain sections of society.
- BR Ambedkar wanted erstwhile depressed classes to also be categorised as minorities.
- That was strongly opposed by the Congress and was not adopted in the Constitution. Instead, a principle of affirmative action was introduced for certain sections of society, for certain needs, that is, education and employment, which would ensure their justice and development. This was done unanimously. But in this principle, there is no concept of “Reservation based on Proportion to Population”.

Concept of Reservation based on Proportion to Population

- This concept is patently unconstitutional. It goes against the letter and spirit of the Constitution. India is a Republic which recognises equality among citizens.
- Ambedkar opined that redistribution of seats, which will also apply to jobs, should be in proportion to the economic and social standing.
- Ambedkar was clear that the fair share should be based on the socioeconomic and education standing of the group, which can be supplemented by the population.

Suggestions

- We need a policy that is for economic and educational empowerment for all, irrespective of caste and religion, and an additional policy for the group that is discriminated against.
- Caste Census: The two benefits will be
 - The First is that you go down from broader caste categories like SCs to sub castes. So, have a population estimate of these sub castes or even religious groups for that matter and social groups within the religion.
 - The caste census will also, among other things, reveal how certain castes who were earlier deprived and discriminated against have moved on. This will be important new information that will come out.



InBrief

6. Tirupati's annual folk festival draws large number of devotees despite delayed start

Source: The Hindu, Page 3

News: Devotees started pouring in large numbers to the Thathayagunta Gangamma temple for the ongoing annual folk festival 'Ganga Jatara'.

About Ganga Jatara

- The Ganga Jatara is an annual folk festival celebrated in various parts of South India, including Karnataka, Rayalaseema, and Andhra Pradesh regions.
- Duration: The festival typically lasts for eight days.
- Deity: The Jatara is dedicated to Goddess Gangamma, also referred to as Gangamma Thalli, considered the protector deity of the region.
- Tirupati Significance: In Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, the Ganga Jatara is a week-long event held between the first and second weeks of May. Here, Goddess Gangamma is worshipped as the sister of Lord Venkateshwara Balaji, the presiding deity of the famous Tirupati Temple.
- The Tirupati Ganga Jatara was recently declared a state festival by the Andhra Pradesh government.
- It is for the first time in the history of the centuries-old temple that the folk festival, which was scheduled to be held from May 7 to 15, was postponed by a week in view of the elections on May 13.

7. Violence rages in New Caledonia as France rushes security forces to islands

Source: The Hindu, Page 14

News: Violence raged across New Caledonia for the third consecutive day, hours after France imposed a state of emergency in the French Pacific territory.

About New Caledonia

- Location: New Caledonia is a French territory located in the southwest Pacific Ocean, east of Australia and north of New Zealand.
- Political Status: It is a special collectivity of France with a unique status, having significant autonomy but remaining under French sovereignty.
- Capital: The capital of New Caledonia is Nouméa.
- Geography: The territory consists of the main island, Grande Terre, the Loyalty Islands, the Isle of Pines, and several smaller islands.
- Economy: New Caledonia's economy is largely driven by nickel mining, which is one of the largest reserves in the world, along with tourism and agriculture.
- Population: The population is diverse, comprising indigenous Kanaks, people of European descent (Caldoche), Polynesians, and other communities.



- Referendums: New Caledonia has held referendums on independence from France, with the latest in 2021 resulting in a vote to remain part of France.

8. U.S. proposes reclassifying marijuana as a low-risk drug

Source: The Hindu, Page 14

News: USA administration formally proposed reclassifying marijuana as a less dangerous Schedule III drug.

About Marijuana

- Botanical Information: Marijuana, also known as cannabis, is a plant species in the Cannabaceae family. The primary psychoactive component is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).
- Legal Status in India: Under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985, the production, sale, and use of marijuana are largely illegal in India, with exceptions for certain traditional and medicinal uses.
- Medical Use: Despite its legal restrictions, marijuana has recognized medicinal properties and is used to treat conditions such as chronic pain, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis in various parts of the world.



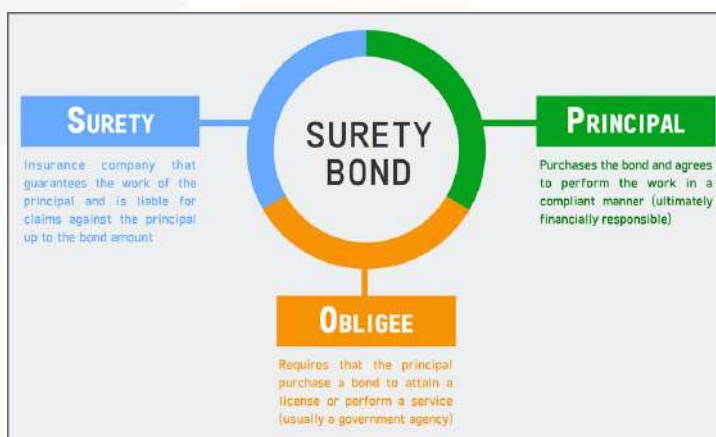
9. Insurance Surety Bonds

Source: PIB

News: NHAH organised a workshop in New Delhi on implementation of Insurance Surety Bonds (ISB) for NHAH contracts.

About Insurance Surety Bonds

- Definition: Insurance Surety Bonds (ISB) are a type of insurance policy that guarantees the fulfilment of contractual obligations by a principal to a beneficiary, protecting the beneficiary from losses if the principal fails to meet the terms of the contract.
- Purpose: ISBs are typically used in construction, government contracts, and other sectors where contractual performance is critical. They provide financial assurance and risk management.
- Components: An ISB involves three parties: the principal (who purchases the



bond), the obligee (who receives the bond's protection), and the surety (the insurer providing the bond).

- Economic Impact: ISBs help in facilitating smooth project execution, attracting investment, and enhancing the credibility of contractors, thus contributing to economic growth and stability.

10. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) - Quarterly Bulletin (January-March 2024)

Source: PIB

News: Recently, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report was released for the Quarter January-March 2024.

About Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- Introduction and Purpose: The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) was launched by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2017 to provide comprehensive and timely data on employment and unemployment in India.
- Frequency and Coverage: PLFS is conducted annually with quarterly reports for urban areas, covering a wide range of labour force metrics including labour force participation rate (LFPR), worker population ratio (WPR), and unemployment rate (UR).



Daily Quiz

1. Recently, the Supreme Court limited the power of ED to arrest PMLA accused. Consider the following statements:

1. The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is not a predicate-offence-oriented law.
2. The PMLA is applicable to all persons which include individuals, companies and firms.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

2. Recently, the SC ruled that compulsory property acquisition without mandatory procedures & compensation is unconstitutional. Which article of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to property as a legal right?

- A. Article 14
- B. Article 19
- C. Article 300A
- D. Article 32

3. Recently, Russian President Putin was on his 19th visit to China since becoming Russia's leader. In this regard, which geographical feature forms a natural boundary between Russia and China?

- A. Ural Mountains
- B. Amur River
- C. Altai Mountains
- D. Gobi Desert

4. Which of the following statements best describes the initial phase of drug development?

- A. Target proteins are randomly selected from a pool of candidates.
- B. Druggable proteins are identified solely through clinical trials.
- C. Computer models are primarily used to validate drug efficacy.
- D. Drug development begins with identifying and validating a target protein.

5. "This festival is an annual celebration observed in several regions of South India, including Karnataka, Rayalaseema, and Andhra Pradesh. It is commemorated as a significant event, where devotees pay homage to a Goddess, who is regarded as the sister of Lord Venkateshwara Balaji, the principal deity of the renowned Tirupati Temple. Recently, It is for the first time in the history of the centuries-old temple that the folk festival was postponed by a week in view of the elections." Identify the festival.

- A. Ganga Jatra
- B. Bonalu
- C. Pongal
- D. Thrissur Pooram

6. Consider the following statements regarding "Marijuana":

1. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS Act) of 1985 regulates the production, possession, and use of marijuana.
2. Ayurvedic medicine traditionally uses cannabis for therapeutic purposes.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

7. "These are a type of insurance policy that guarantees the fulfilment of contractual obligations by a principal to a beneficiary, protecting the beneficiary from losses if the principal fails to meet the terms of the contract."

Which of the following correctly describes the above paragraph?

- A. Insurance Maintenance Bonds
- B. Insurance Bid Bonds
- C. Insurance Surety Bonds
- D. Insurance Payment Bonds



8. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is conducted in India to:

- A. Estimate employment and unemployment indicators every six months.
- B. Track changes in wages and salaries across different sectors.
- C. Monitor the skill levels of the workforce in various industries.
- D. Analyse the working conditions in formal and informal sectors.

Solutions

Answer 1: B

Solution 1:

- Statement 1 is incorrect: The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) remains a predicate-offence-oriented law. A predicate offence is an offence whose earnings may become the subject of any of the money-laundering offences established under the Convention.
- Statement 2 is correct: The PMLA is applicable to all persons which include individuals, companies, firms, partnership firms, associations of persons or incorporations and any agency, office or branch owned or controlled by any of the above-mentioned persons.

Hence, Option B is correct.

Answer 2: C

Solution 2:

- Article 300A provides that “no person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law”.

Hence, option C is correct.

Answer 3: B

Solution 3: The most important waterway in the far-eastern part of Russia is the Amur River. It is formed by the union of the Argun and Shilka rivers. For 1,100 miles (1,800 kilometres) the river provides a natural boundary between Russia

to the north and the People's Republic of China to the south.

Hence, Option B is correct.

Answer 4: D

Solution 4:

- Drug development begins by identifying and validating a target (usually a protein).
- Druggable proteins have ideal docking sites for drugs.
- Target proteins are identified using computer models.
- This method avoids time-consuming lab experiments.
- Suitable targets and drugs move to pre-clinical testing on cells and animals.
- Clinical phase tests drugs on a small number of human patients for safety and efficacy.
- Successful drugs undergo regulatory approval and marketing.

Hence, option D is correct.

Answer 5: A

Solution 5:

- The Ganga Jatara is an annual folk festival celebrated in various parts of South India, including Karnataka, Rayalaseema, and Andhra Pradesh regions.
- Duration: The festival typically lasts for eight days.



- Deity: The Jatara is dedicated to Goddess Gangamma, also referred to as Gangamma Thalli, considered the protector deity of the region.

Hence, option A is correct.

Answer 6: C

Solution 6:

- Statement 1 is correct: Under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985, the production, sale, and use of marijuana are largely illegal in India, with exceptions for certain traditional and medicinal uses.
- Statement 2 is correct: Despite its legal restrictions, marijuana has recognized medicinal properties and is used to treat conditions such as chronic pain, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis in various parts of the world.

Hence, option C is correct.

Answer 7: C

Solution 7:

- Insurance Surety Bonds (ISB) are a type of insurance policy that guarantees the fulfilment of contractual obligations by a principal to a beneficiary, protecting the beneficiary from losses if the principal fails to meet the terms of the contract.

Hence, Option C is correct.

Answer 8: A

Solution 8:

- The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) was launched by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2017 to provide comprehensive and timely data on employment and unemployment in India.

Hence, option A is correct.





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