

TABLE OF CONTENT

A. [GS1 Related](#)

B. [GS2 Related](#)

Polity

1. [Naidu sweeps V-P polls with 516 votes](#)
2. [Hold competitive exams in regional languages: KDA](#)
3. [Lok Sabha passes Bill for setting up petroleum institute in Andhra](#)
4. [Wages of being a legislator](#)

C. [GS3 Related](#)

Science and Technology

1. [Low-cost, sensitive CO sensor from IISc](#)

D. [GS4 Related](#)

1. [Editing ourselves: On genes and ethics](#)

E. [Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn](#)

F. [Bills/Acts/Schemes/Orgs in News](#)

G. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

H. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

A. GS1 Related

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B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY

1. [Naidu sweeps V-P polls with 516 votes](#)

In news

- Venkaiah Naidu was elected the 15th Vice-President of India on Saturday.
- The election saw the highest polling percentage at 98.12%
- Mr. Naidu polled a massive 516 votes of a total of 760 valid votes.

2. [Hold competitive exams in regional languages: KDA](#)

In news

- The Kannada Development Authority (KDA) urged the Centre to conduct competitive examinations in all official languages of States.
- KDA Chairman S.G. Siddaramaiah said the current policy has proved detrimental to the interests of people of various States and regions. He said that "the very fabric of federalism needs to be better appreciated in this selection as well as in any Central government recruitment process."
- **Demands proposed:**
- Besides Central civil service examinations, all competitive examinations of national level, especially banking services, must be held in official languages of States.
- In the recruitment to any job of Central, semi-government and public sectors, candidates should be allowed to choose question papers and answer in languages identified in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, he said.
- The use of English should be restricted to compulsory English paper in order to avoid unwarranted English supremacy.

3. [Lok Sabha passes Bill for setting up petroleum institute in Andhra](#)

IIPE

- The Lok Sabha has passed a Bill providing for the establishment of the **Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IIPE)**
- **Where:** Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
- The institute will cost the Centre Rs 650 crore
- It is part of a package promised by the Centre to Andhra after the creation of the separate state of Telangana
- It will have the status of an institute of national importance

4. [Wages of being a legislator](#)

Context

- The Tamil Nadu Assembly recently voted to double the salaries of its legislators

- Maharashtra's Assembly passed a Bill in 2016 that raised the monthly salary of its MLAs to above that of the President (Rs. 1.5 lakh per month)
- India paid 2.7 lakh a month, which includes salaries and expenses, to every Member of Parliament in 2015.

Global examples

- Public representatives in developing countries in Africa and Asia are routinely paid far above per capita GDP
- Nigeria, pays its lawmakers more than 100 times its per capita GDP while in Kenya, its legislators get 76 times its per capita GDP.
- Gross salary of an Italian lawmaker is the second highest among developed countries after the U.S

What's the situation in India?

- India's initial start was promising. The first cabinet meeting of Jawaharlal Nehru took a collective decision not to avail of their salaries for six months, given the enormous economic suffering in India then.
- Today, parliamentary representatives have arrogated the authority to increase their own fiscal compensation by 1,250% over the last two decades – a case of questionable moral rectitude.

Main concern?

- Allowances should be in proportion to the services that they have rendered to the nation, but in the past two decades, Parliament has seen less than 50% of Bills being scrutinised by parliamentary committees, defeating the very purpose of a deliberative Parliament
- Money Bills, like those associated with Aadhaar, have been passed without being referred to a committee.

A survey of parliamentary salaries

- It was conducted in 2013 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union across 104 Parliaments highlighted that salaries in about 55% are linked to a structured scale, typically linked to the civil service (France, Japan) or ministerial salaries
- Mature democracies typically have separate independent bodies to establish parliamentary salaries; such as the Remuneration Tribunal in Australia or the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers in South Africa.

Way forward

- Instead of seeking pay in line with the private sector, India's public representatives should be paid a reasonable wage, which offers gratitude for their commitment to life as a public servant
- Require an external, independent body to determine parliamentary salaries.
- Salary reviews should be conducted through an institutionalised process
- Increments should be determined through a transparent and accountable process
- The issue of decline in parliamentary sittings could be partially alleviated by linking salaries to a minimum attendance of parliamentary sessions

C. GS3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Low-cost, sensitive CO sensor from IISc](#)

In news

- Indian Institute of Science researchers have developed a highly sensitive nanometer-scale **carbon monoxide sensor** by employing an innovative fabrication technique.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) can have adverse effects on the health of people exposed to it. Hence, it becomes necessary to have good, low-cost carbon-monoxide sensors.

Working principle

- Typically, a sensor would be a thin, current carrying plate whose resistance changes on exposure to carbon monoxide. This in turn changes the value of the current flowing through it. This change when measured indicates the level of carbon monoxide in the air.
- Most available sensors are in the micrometer range, a nanometer-sized detector would have a higher sensitivity, but the cost of manufacturing it goes up as the size decreases.

Smart cities and nano-sensors

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has a vision of deploying such sensors in large scale for pollution monitoring in large cities like Delhi and Bengaluru.
- If the sensors are installed in all traffic intersections, we can do real time mapping of pollution hot-spots in a city. This would be an enabler in realizing smart cities.

D. GS4 Related

1. [Editing ourselves: On genes and ethics](#)

Context:

- Scientists have for the first time managed to edit genes in a human embryo to repair a genetic mutation.

Solution to genetic mutation

- Scientists fixed a mutation that thickens the heart muscle, a condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.
- The cardiac disease causes sudden death in otherwise healthy young athletes and affects about one in 500 people overall.
- It is caused by a mutation in a particular gene and a child will suffer from the condition even if it inherits only one copy of the mutated gene.

Significance of the research:

- Correcting the mutation in the gene would not only ensure that the child is healthy but it would also prevent the mutation from being passed on to future generations

Other concerns

- Though the research marks a major milestone in genome editing of embryos, it will be a long while before it becomes available as a tool to produce healthy embryos.
- Even research on embryos using federal funding is not permitted in the U.S., where the research was carried out.
- The embryos were produced with the clear intention of using them solely for research and not for implanting them in women.

Advantages of gene editing

- Several diseases can potentially be prevented by using this technique, including some cancers.
- CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing tool is safe for preventing certain hereditary disease-causing mutations, for which no other treatment is available.

Issue

- The main issue is the prospect of developing designer babies through gene editing.

E. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

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F. Bills/Acts/Schemes/Orgs inÂ News

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G. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper II

1. “We need an external, independent body to determine parliamentary salaries” Examine?

GS Paper III

1. Explain CRISPR Gene editing technology its applications and concerns raised against this technology?

GS Paper IV

1. What is meant by “environmental ethics”? Why is it important to study? Discuss any one environmental issue from the viewpoint of environmental ethics.
2. You are working as an Executive Engineer in the construction cell of a Municipal Corporation and are presently in-charge of the construction of a flyover. There are two Junior Engineers under you who have the responsibility of day-to-day inspection of the site and are reporting to you, while you are finally reporting to the Chief Engineer who heads the cell. While the construction is heading towards completion, the Junior Engineers have been regularly reporting that all construction is taking place as per design specifications. However, in one of your surprise inspections, you have noticed some serious deviations and lacunae which, in your opinion, are likely to affect the safety of the flyover. Rectification of these lacunae at this stage would require a substantial amount of demolition and rework which will cause a tangible loss to the contractor and will also delay completion. There is a lot of public pressure on the Corporation to get this construction completed because of heavy traffic congestion in the area. When you brought this matter to the notice of the Chief Engineer, he advised you that in his opinion it is not a very serious lapse and may be ignored. He advised for further expediting the project for completion in time. However, you are convinced that this was a serious matter which might affect public safety and should not be left unaddressed. What will you do in such a situation? Some of the options are given below. Evaluate the merits and demerits of each of these options and finally suggest what course of action you would like to take, giving reasons. (20 marks |250 words)
 1. Follow the advice of the Chief Engineer and go ahead.
 2. Make an exhaustive report of the situation bringing out all facts and analysis along with your own viewpoints stated clearly and seeks for written orders from the chief Engineer.
 3. Call for explanation from the Junior Engineers and issue orders to the contractor for necessary correction within targeted time.
 4. Highlight the issue so that it reaches superiors above the Chief Engineer.
 5. Considering the rigid attitude of the Chief Engineer, seek transfer from the project or report sick.