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## A. GS1 Related

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## B. GS2 Related

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### **Category: POLITY**

1. [SC warns of challenge to GM mustard roll out](#)

#### **In news**

- The Supreme Court on Monday said a government decision favouring a commercial roll-out of genetically modified (GM) mustard seeds will not go unchallenged.
- The court will hear pleas highlighting the health hazards.

2. [Hard act](#)

#### **Context**

- Section 498A has been made to contain violence against women within the family.

#### **Issues with Section 498A**

- Operation of IPC was weighted against husbands and their birth families, and automatically presumed the complainant to be an innocent
- Women and Child Development Ministry have acknowledged that the law has been misused too often.
- Prevalence of misuse, is reflected in the data of the National Crime Records Bureau â€” less than one in five charge sheets filed has resulted in conviction.

#### **Proposals**

- Minister Maneka Gandhi has asked the National Commission for Women to be accessible to men who claim to be falsely accused.
- Apex court has issued fresh guidelines prohibiting the immediate arrest of family members, except in cases involving physical injury or death
- Maneka Gandhi has recommended a more stringent filing process which insists on identity proof, and has warned that while opening a window to the victims of false claims, the NCW should not open the door wide to false counter-claims
- The SC wants the establishment of family welfare committees in every district, to which all complaints are to be referred

- Besides, the court has prescribed that bail applications must be decided on the date of application. Since bail is a right, courts may be more inclined to grant rather than withhold, which could again increase the risk to the complainant.

### Way forward?

- The law must retain its progressive bias in favour of wronged women, without inadvertently wronging men.

### Category: *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

#### 1. [Indian government cuts down on US lobbying to lowest in 7 years](#)

#### In News

- The Indian government has slashed its expenses towards lobbying in the US with a total payment of USD 120,000 to its registered lobbyist firm in the second quarter of 2017 – the first cut in nearly seven years.
- The disclosure has been made by **BGR Government Affairs**, which lobbied on behalf of Republic of India on issues relating to bilateral US-India relations.

#### Basic Information

#### Lobbying

- **Lobbying is a communication process used by members of a pressure group for persuasion.**
- **Lobbying is used to influence governmental policy process.**
- **It also acts as an instrument that links citizens and decision-makers.**
- **Lobbying takes place when a few members of pressure groups loiter in the corridors of power with a view to securing an opportunity to interact with legislators and to influence the decisions of the policy makers.**

#### Pros of lobbying

- They use a democratic process.
- Check the power of majorities.
- They have the ability to motivate legislators.
- Allow for better representation of interests.
- Provide positive solutions.
- They serve as an avenue for political involvement.
- Ensure an outspread dispersal of expenses

#### Cons of lobbying

- They would often seek for the minority of people.
- They only have one track in mind.
- They are only effective for themselves.
- They would commit serious crimes.
- They lead to "hyperpluralism".

### C. GS3 Related

### Category: *ECONOMICS*

#### 1. [Core sector growth slows to 0.4% in June](#)

#### In news

- The year-on-year growth of the core sector has slowed to 0.4% in June from 3.6% in May and 6.92% in June 2016 – owing to a decline in output of coal, refinery products, fertilizer and cement.
- The performance in June is the lowest since the growth of 0.18% in November 2015.

#### Basic Information

#### Basic Information

- **The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index for India which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity and manufacturing.**
- **The all India IIP is a composite indicator that measures the short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products during a given period with respect to that in a chosen base period.**
- **It is compiled and published monthly by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) six weeks after the reference month ends.**
- **The current base year is 2011-2012**
- **Within IIP, following 8 are core industries because they've impact on almost all other economic activities: Coal, fertilizer, electricity, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, steel, and cement.**
- **The eight core industries comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).**

#### 2. [What is NHB Residex?](#)

#### In news:

## NHB Residex from the National Housing Bank

- It is a set of benchmarks that aims to track housing price indicators across Indian cities
- It is designed by a technical advisory committee comprising Government representatives, lenders and property market player

### Two sets of indices

- The NHB Residex currently offers two sets of quarterly Housing Price Indices (HPIs) across the cities it tracks

### Basic Information

#### National Housing Bank (NHB)

- **It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), was set up on 9 July 1988 under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987**
- **NHB is an apex financial institution for housing**
- **NHB has been established with an objective to operate as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local and regional levels and to provide financial and other support incidental to such institutions and for matters connected therewith.**
- **NHB registers, regulates and supervises Housing Finance Company (HFCs), keeps surveillance through On-site & Off-site Mechanisms and co-ordinates with other Regulators.**

### 3. [From plate to plough: Everybody loves a good crop](#)

#### Context

- The sums insured under National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS), modified NAIS, and Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS) were too low, as premiums were kept low and it was not based on any robust scientific system and had its own loopholes.
- Introduction of “Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana” was a path breaking scheme for farmers’ welfare

#### Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY)- a game changer

- Raised the sums insured to realistic levels, basically to cover the cost of cultivation of farmers.
- The premiums were heavily subsidised by the Centre and the states in equal proportions
- compared to kharif year 2013, the number of farmers opting for the scheme increased by 210 per cent in kharif 2016, and the area covered increased by 126 per cent
- But the effectiveness of crop insurance scheme is based on how fast it can settle the claims of farmers. It is here that the governance of the state is tested

#### Three critical steps in this process

- The state has to notify the crops, make clusters of districts, determine the sums to be insured based on district level committees, and invite tenders from insurance companies;
- The state and the Centre have to pay premium to the companies providing insurance; and
- In case of crop damages, quickly assess the damages and ask companies to pay the claims of farmers

#### Challenges in the implementation

- If states delay notifications, or payment of premiums, or crop cutting data, companies cannot pay compensation to the farmers in time.
- Similarly, most states failed to provide smartphones to revenue staff to capture and upload data of crop cutting, which continues to come with enormous delay.
- There is hardly any use of modern technology in assessing crop damages.

#### Way forward

- There is an urgent need to link the insurance database with Core Banking Solution (CBS) so that when premium is deducted from a farmer’s bank account, the bank sends him a message informing about the premium, sum insured and name of insurance company.

### Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

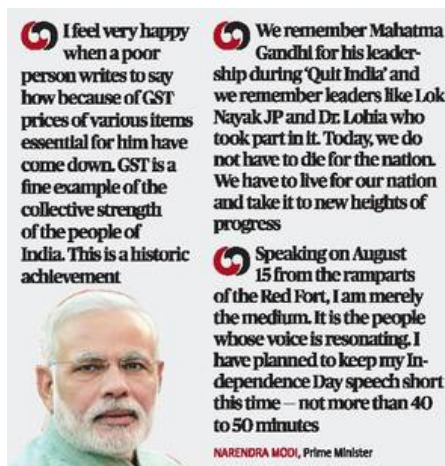
#### 1. [Turmeric can be used to fight cancer in children, find U.S. scientists](#)

#### In news

- Scientists in the US have found yet another use for **curcumin**, the bioactive component of turmeric that is widely used in Indian cuisine, this time to treat cancer in children.
- Nanoparticles loaded with curcumin can target and destroy neuroblastoma tumour cells. Neuroblastoma is the most common cancer in children younger than five years old.

#### Neuroblastoma

- The cancers start in early nerve cells and commonly form in the tissue of the adrenal glands, near the kidneys.
- They are also associated with developmental delays, hearing loss, or other disabilities even after traditional treatments have ended.
- High-risk neuroblastoma can be resistant to traditional therapy, and survival can be poor.



### 1. [Itâ€™s Sankalp Parva on August 15: PM](#)

#### PM urged to Indians

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged Indians to celebrate August 15 this year as Sankalp Parva , or Day of Resolve.
- Why: PM announced this day for doing something constructive for the country, with a deadline of August 2022 as the time of Siddhi (attainment of that ideal).

#### D. GS4 Related

*Nothing here for Today!!!*

#### [PIB Articles Editorials Roundup](#)

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

##### Schemes in News About the Schemes

*ELEVATE 100*

- ELEVATE 100, an initiative of the Department of Information Technology and Biotechnology, Government of Karnataka aims to provide a comprehensive entrepreneurship platform for startups.
- The top 100 technology based startups chosen through a rigorous hunt across Karnataka State will tap into a whopping sum of Rs.400 Cr of Government funds. This is the largest pool of funds ever offered by any State Government to Startups.

#### F. Bills/Acts/Schemes/Orgs inÂ News

*Nothing here for Today!!!*

#### G. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

#### G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

##### GS PAPER II

1. To what extent Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana was able to address the farmers grievances? What are the challenges and issues involved in the implementation?
2. “While the rash of false allegations under Section 498A demand a course correction, interventions could be as problematic.” Discuss.

##### GS PAPER IV

1. All human beings aspire for happiness. Do you agree? What does happiness mean to you? Explain with examples.
2. Rameshwar successfully cleared the prestigious civil services examination and was excited about the opportunity that he would get through the civil services to serve the country. However, soon after joining the services, he realized that things are not as rosy as he had imagined.

He found a number of malpractices prevailing in the department assigned to him. For example, funds under various schemes and grants were being misappropriated. The official facilities were frequently being used for personal needs by the officers and staff. After some time, he noticed that the process of recruiting the staff was also not up to the mark. Prospective candidates were required to write an examination in which a lot of cheating was going on. Some candidates were provided external help in the examination. Rameshwar brought these incidents to the notice of his seniors. However, he was advised to keep his eyes, ears and mouth shut and ignore all these things which were taking place with the connivance of the higher-ups. Rameshwar felt highly disillusioned and uncomfortable. He comes to you seeking your advice.

**Indicate various options that you think are available in this situation. How would you help him to evaluate**

**these options and choose the most appropriate path to be adopted? (250 words.)**