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Category: POLITY

1. [No rash of conversions in Kerala, State govt. tells SC](#)

Context:

- **The Hadiya case:** involving the alleged conversion of a Hindu woman to Islam and her marriage to a Muslim man

In news:

- Centre's **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** claims in the Supreme Court that the **Hadiya case**, involving the alleged conversion of a Hindu woman to Islam and her marriage to a Muslim man, is part of a **pattern of religious conversions and radicalisation in the southern State**.
- The Pinarayi Vijayan government in Kerala rejected the claims made by the NIA.
- In an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court, the Kerala government said the investigation conducted by the State police had not revealed any offences which warranted an NIA probe.
- The State also questioned the sudden transfer of the case to the NIA, saying the State Police Chief had already entrusted the investigation to the Additional Director General of Police (Crimes) and directed to constitute a Special Investigation Team.
- **Supreme Court's present stand** : "We will hear logical and legal arguments on two issues – can the HC nullify a marriage exercising jurisdiction under Article 226 and was an NIA probe necessary,"

Basic Information:

Article 226. Power of High Courts to issue certain writs

(1) Notwithstanding anything in Article 32 every High Court shall have powers, throughout the territories in relation to which it exercise jurisdiction, to issue to any person or authority, including in appropriate cases, any Government, within those territories directions, orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibitions, quo warranto and certiorari, or any of them, for the enforcement of any of the rights conferred by Part III and for any other purpose

(2) The power conferred by clause (1) to issue directions, orders or writs to any Government, authority or person may also be exercised by any High Court exercising jurisdiction in relation to the territories within which the cause of action, wholly or in part, arises for the exercise of such power, notwithstanding that the seat of such Government or authority or the residence of such person is not within those territories

(3) Where any party against whom an interim order, whether by way of injunction or stay or in any other manner, is made on, or in any proceedings relating to, a petition under clause (1), without

1. (a) furnishing to such party copies of such petition and all documents in support of the plea for such interim order; and
2. (b) giving such party an opportunity of being heard, makes an application to the High Court for the vacation of such order and furnishes a copy of such application to the party in whose favour such order has been made or the counsel of such party, the High Court shall dispose of the application within a period of two weeks from the date on which it is received or from the date on which the copy of such application is so furnished, whichever is later, or where the High Court is closed on the last day of that period, before the expiry of the next day afterwards on which the High Court is open; and if the application is not so disposed of, the interim order shall, on the expiry of that period, or, as the case may be, the expiry of the aid next day, stand vacated

(4) The power conferred on a High Court by this article shall not be in derogation of the power conferred on the Supreme court by clause (2) of Article 32

2. [Insurer can't deny claim on grounds of delayed filing, says Supreme Court](#)

In news:

- The Supreme Court has ruled that insurance claims cannot be denied to a person merely on the grounds of delay in filing the claim, holding that "mechanical" denials on technical bases will cause people to lose confidence in the industry.
- The Supreme Court set aside the verdicts of various consumer courts, including the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), which had ruled that insurance companies could deny the benefit of cover for delay in filing the claims.
- **Judgment:** "It is true that the owner has to intimate the insurer immediately after the theft of the vehicle. However, this condition should not bar settlement of genuine claims, particularly when the delay in intimation or submission of documents is due to unavoidable circumstances. The decision of the insurer to reject the claim has to be based on valid grounds. Rejection of the claims on purely technical grounds in a mechanical manner will result in loss of confidence of policyholders in the insurance industry."
- The verdict would bring big relief to people who fail to file insurance claims immediately after their vehicles are damaged in accidents or stolen.

3. [Draft policy for abolishing Haj subsidy](#)

In news:

Key highlights of a proposed Haj policy drafted by a committee appointed by the Centre:

- Abolishing subsidy for Haj pilgrims and
- Allow muslim women devotees above 45 to travel in a group of at least four without a male.
- Women below 45, however, will have to be accompanied by male Mehrams, according to the policy.
- It also proposes to increase the quota for Mehrams from 200 to 500.

Key Points:

- The proposed Haj Policy 2018-22, by a panel headed by former secretary Afzal Amanullah, also recommends bringing down the number of embarkation points (EPs) from which pilgrims can take flights to Saudi Arabia from the present 21 to nine.
- The policy has been drafted in light of a 2012 Supreme Court order asking the Centre to abolish the subsidy gradually by 2022
- India has an annual Haj quota of 1.7 lakh devotees

Practice at present: Till now, women devotees could not travel without a male Mehram. The term Mehram refers to a male a woman cannot marry at anytime in her life (i.e. father, brother or son, etc). The cut in funds meant for subsidy will be used for educational empowerment and welfare of Muslims.

Category: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/BILATERAL RELATIONS

1. [Ukraine seeks Indian peacekeepers](#)

In news:

- Ukraine has asked for Indian peacekeepers to help contain the conflict with Russia in the eastern part of the country.
- Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin said he expects India to "definitely" play a role in the peacekeeping mission which will soon come up for discussion at the **UN Security Council (UNSC)**.

Key points:

- India's role in peacekeeping commended
- Klimkin, is on a three-day visit to India, held extensive discussions with his counterpart, Sushma Swaraj, for the **upcoming inter-governmental commission dialogue between two sides**.
- Klimkin said discussion on India's participation in the peacekeeping mission was at a preliminary level and further consultations were needed to fine-tune the composition of the mission.

Differing views with respect to location of troops:

- Ukraine insists that the troops should be stationed at the original Ukraine-Russia border, Russian sources indicated that Moscow would prefer the troops to be placed at the "Line of Contact" between Ukraine and the rebel held territory.

2. [India plans to lessen its drug reliance on China](#)

In news:

- The recent tension between India and China has prompted the government here to think of measures to reduce its dependence on China for pharmaceutical products.
- The health ministry along with drug regulators is planning to take a series of measures to limit reliance on China as well as tighten the regulatory checks and balances to ensure only **good quality supplies** are entering the Indian market.

Key Points:

- Currently, India gets 70-80% of its medicines and medical devices supplies, including raw material for pharmaceuticals (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient) from China. **This poses a major risk of severe drug shortage**

if India's diplomatic relations with China worsen.

- The landed price of API from China in India is 15-20% less than its production cost here, making it more viable for companies to import.
- **In fact, in 2014, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval had also warned the government about India's over-dependence on China for API and how tension between the two countries can cause a crisis in the public health system of India.**
- Following Doval's alert, the government had formed a committee of experts to formulate a specific policy to boost API manufacturing in India.
- India was once a favoured destination for sourcing low-cost, good quality raw material for manufacturing medicines. Gradually, China has taken over this bulk drug market globally in the past few years by creating huge capacities.

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F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper II

1. There is no necessary connection between religion and personal laws on the one hand and Civil Laws and Personal Laws are different on the other. In this context discuss the need for Uniform Civil Code and the different challenges associated with this.
2. "Currently, India gets 70-80% of its medicines and medical devices supplies, including raw material for pharmaceuticals (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient) from China. This poses a major risk of severe drug shortage if India's diplomatic relations with China worsen" Examine.