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## B. GS2 Related

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### *Category: POLITY*

#### 1. [Law panel nod for DNA bank to fight crime](#)

#### **In news**

- The Law Commission approved a central bill for **regulating use of DNA-based technology as a forensic tool** in civil and criminal proceedings, and for identification of missing persons and unidentified bodies.
- The 271st report of the Law Commission headed by **Justice B S Chauhan** submitted to law minister, a new draft bill “**the DNA Based Technology (Use and Regulation) Bill, 2017**” in place of an earlier bill on the issue referred to it by the Union government in September 2016 and said it had **enough safeguards to protect right to privacy of citizens**.
- Concerns raised by sections of civil society: proposed law amounts to breach the privacy of individuals.
- Law panel response: use of DNA-based technology for criminal investigation, identification of missing persons and unidentified bodies as well as the proposed National DNA Data Bank would in no way breach the privacy of individuals.
- **Why DNA Data Banks?**  
DNA Data Banks, both national and at state level, will be responsible for storing DNA profiles received from accredited laboratories and maintaining certain indices for various categories of data, like crime scene index, suspects’ index, offenders’ index, missing persons’ index and unknown deceased persons’ index.
- **DNA profiling and Law commission recommendations:**
  - DNA profiling would be undertaken exclusively for identification of a person and would not be used to extract any other information.
  - Strict confidentiality in safekeeping of records of DNA profiles and their use. Violation of confidentiality would be liable for punishment of imprisonment, which may extend up to three years and also fine which may extend to Rs 2 lakh.
- **DNA Profiling Board**
  - The bill drafted by the commission proposed setting up of a statutory DNA Profiling Board which would lay down procedures and standards for establishment of DNA laboratories, supervise their functioning and frame

guidelines for training police and other investigating agencies dealing with DNA-related matters.

## 2. [Supreme Court nixes Assam law to bypass mantri cap](#)

### In news

- The Supreme Court struck down as **unconstitutional** a law passed by Assam assembly 13 years ago to allow the then Congress government headed by Tarun Gogoi to appoint MLAs as parliamentary secretaries after Parliament had put a cap on the number of ministers.
- The SC had earlier declared appointment of **parliamentary secretaries** by some other states by executive order, as done by the AAP government in Delhi, as illegal and struck down these appointments.
- This SC order striking down a law for appointment of parliamentary secretaries could nudge the Election Commission to decide the issue of disqualification of 21 MLAs who were appointed parliamentary secretaries by Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.
- The appointment of AAP MLAs as parliamentary secretaries was struck down as unconstitutional by the Delhi high court in September last year.

### Constitution 91st Amendment Act

- Parliament had on January 1, 2004 passed the Constitution 91st Amendment Bill, 2003, to modify Articles 75 and 164 of the Constitution.
- The Act provided that under Article 164(1A), the size of the council of ministers in a state should not exceed 15% of the total strength of the assembly.

### Background information

- When the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003, came into force, the Assam council of ministers had 36 members in a House of 126 MLAs, or 28.57% of the strength of the assembly.
- In view of Article 164(1A), the number of ministers was to be brought down to 19 to be consistent with the 15% ceiling.
- To appease MLAs who lost their place in the council of ministers, the government promulgated **Assam Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances and Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, 2004**, which took the shape of a law on December 29, 2004.
- In the first instance, the Tarun Gogoi government appointed eight parliamentary secretaries. Six months before elections in September 2015, the government appointed 13 more parliamentary secretaries.

### Similar instances

In June 2015, the Calcutta HC quashed appointment of 24 parliamentary secretaries in West Bengal and termed it unconstitutional. The Bombay HC in 2009 had struck down appointment of two parliamentary secretaries in Goa. The Himachal Pradesh HC in 2005 had in a similar ruling struck down appointment of eight chief parliamentary secretaries and four parliamentary secretaries. In May 2015, the Hyderabad HC had stayed appointment of parliamentary secretaries in Telangana.

## 3. [Panel for action against farmers using herbicides on GM mustard](#)

### In news

- The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee's (GEAC) sub-committee has drafted several recommendations on GM mustard before it approved the crop for commercial release in May this year.
- These included a proposal for **legal action on farmers** using the **glufosinate-based herbicide (Basta)** on the crop unless otherwise approved by the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee.

### Detrimental to humans

- According to the U.S. National Institute of Health, Glufosinate-based herbicides act as a neurotoxin and have adverse impacts on humans

### Category: **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

## 1. [Mediate in Al-Aqsa row: Palestine to India](#)

### In news:

- Palestine wants India to intervene to stop excessive security measures imposed by Israel on worshippers at Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.
- In a rare press conference, Adnan M A Abualhayjaa, Palestine ambassador to India said that the Indian government with close ties to Israel should persuade them to stop impositions resulting in the worst clashes in Jerusalem in years.

## 2. [India rejects OIC move on vigilantism](#)

### In news:

### Strong Rejection

- India has strongly rejected the resolutions of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- The resolution had expressed concern about the recent attacks on people by cow-vigilante groups

### Government Response:

- Government has stated that the resolutions adopted at the Organisation's latest foreign ministers' meeting were 'factually incorrect'

## Basic Information

### Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with a collective population of over 1.6 billion as of 2008.
- The organisation states that it is 'the collective voice of the Muslim world' and works to 'safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony'.
- The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.
- The official languages of the OIC are Arabic, English, and French

### 3. [The crossroads at the Doklam plateau](#)

**Context:** The Indo-Bhutanese relationship amid the current stand off between Indian and Chinese Army

#### Historical overview

- Since 1960, 1,500 Km of roads have been built by India across Bhutan's most difficult mountains and passes
- These roads built and maintained by the Indian Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under Project Dantak

#### Past discussions on Doklam Plateau

- The Doklam plateau is an area that China and Bhutan have long discussed (over 24 rounds of negotiations that began in 1984)
- Chinese also offered a 'package deal' to Bhutan, under which the Chinese agreed to renounce their claim over the 495-sq.-km disputed land
- In exchange for a smaller tract of disputed land measuring 269 sq. km, the Doklam plateau
- But India was able to convince Bhutan to defer a decision

#### Indian Government must give importance to Bhutan's sovereignty

- India should avoid any irresponsible comment on Bhutan
- Why: because it matters to Bhutanese people

#### India's Concerns

- India must also be aware that other neighbours are watching the Doklam stand-off closely
- Bhutan is also the only country in the region that joined India in its boycott of Chinese President Xi Jinping's marquee project, the Belt and Road Initiative
- That's why, India relations with Bhutan has become more important

## Category: HEALTH ISSUES

### 1. [Policy boosts care for blood disorders](#)

#### In News

- People living with Thalassaemia, sickle cell anaemia and other variant haemoglobins can now look forward to better screening and treatment, based on the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry's new policy.
- Ministry released a policy on the Prevention and Control of haemoglobinopathies in India.

#### What is Thalassaemia, sickle cell anaemia?

- Sickle cell disease and thalassemia are genetic disorders caused by errors in the genes. Sickle cell for hemoglobin, a substance composed of a protein (globin) plus an iron molecule (heme) that is responsible for carrying oxygen within the red blood cell. These disorders can cause fatigue, jaundice, and episodes of pain ranging from mild to very severe. They are inherited, and usually both parents must pass on an abnormal gene in order for a child to have the disease. When this happens, the resulting diseases are serious and, at times, fatal.
- **Thalassaemia** : Is the name for a group of inherited conditions that affect a substance in the blood called haemoglobin. People with the condition produce either no or too little haemoglobin, which is used by red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body. This can make them very anaemic (tired, short of breath and pale).

#### About the policy

- The policy aims at creating treatment protocol benchmarks, to improve the quality of life of patients.
- It is also a guide on prevention and control, which includes antenatal and prenatal testing to reduce the incidence of live haemoglobin disorder births (currently pegged at 10,000-15,000 live births a year).
- Supported by the National Health Mission, Blood Cell and the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, the guidelines provide for screening of pregnant women during antenatal check-up, pre-marital counselling at college level and one-time screening for variant anaemia in children.
- Using public health awareness programmes and education, it highlights various haemoglobinopathies.
- The guidelines include the creation of a national registry to plan future patient services.
- The registry will also collect useful data, such as the location of patients to identify areas of high concentration, ethnicity or other characteristics, age distribution, records of deaths and their cause.
- 20% of patients can afford treatment, the government should ensure that all patients get it free.
- Such free treatment is given in States such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Karnataka besides

- Delhi, and others should follow suit.
- All chelation drugs should be made available free because one drug does not suit all.

### Policy fails to address

- The policy makes no reference to carrier testing for relatives of patients. In Pakistan, a law making carrier testing compulsory for relatives of Thalassaemia patients was passed in February. A similar system is in place in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

## 2. [A grievous lag](#)

### Context

- A 10-year old rape victim is seeking the mercy of the court to get permission for abortion.
- But the court is fettered by Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 in allowing abortion of a pregnancy caused by sexual assault.
- Supreme Court was constrained to seek the opinion of a panel of doctors to “affirm” if the health of a 10-year old, in Chandigarh, will be “adversely affected if her pregnancy is allowed to be full term”.

### MTP Act and constraints

- The MTP Act allows abortions of more than 20-week pregnancies only when “it is immediately necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman”.
- It also requires the judiciary’s sanction for such abortions.

### Recent issues

- In many occasions, the court has rejected abortion petitions on the ground that its hands are tied by the MTP Act
- In January, it did allow a rape victim to abort a 24-week old foetus that had severe abnormalities, but only after a panel of doctors ruled that the pregnancy could put her life in danger.
- A month later, the same court cited the constraints imposed by the MTP Act while refusing permission to a woman to abort her 26-week old foetus that would be born with Down’s Syndrome

### Why the act should be amended?

- There is near unanimity among medico-legal experts that the MTP act has failed to keep up with changes in science.
- They argue that foetal abnormalities show up after 18 weeks and a two-week window after that is too small for the parents to take the difficult call on keeping their baby.
- The growing number of sexual crimes against women and the need to empower them with sexual rights have also made it imperative that the MTP Act be changed.

### Draft Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2014

- It do away with the need for the court’s sanction for aborting a more than 20-week old pregnancy
- It vest that decision on the healthcare provider if the pregnancy involves substantial risks to the mother or child, or if it is “alleged by the pregnant woman to have been caused by rape”.
- Significantly, the draft recognises that “rape may be presumed to constitute a grave injury to the mental health of the pregnant woman, and that such an injury could be a ground for allowing abortion”.
- It has been three years since these progressive changes to the MTP Act were drafted.

## C. GS3 Related

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### Category: *ECONOMICS*

#### 1. [CAC adopts Codex norms for three spices](#)

##### In news:

- The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) adopted three Codex standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin and thyme paving the way for an universal agreement on identifying quality spices in various countries.
- The CAC cleared these standards at its session held in Geneva recently.
- Why?** The adoption of Codex standards for the three spices, it is pointed out, will help evolve a common standardisation process for their global trade and availability of high quality, clean and safe spices to the world.

##### What is “Food code”?

- The Codex Alimentarius or “Food Code” is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- The Commission, also known as CAC, is the central part of the joint FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations)/WHO (World Health Organisation) Food Standards Programme.
- It was established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.

### CAC and India

- The CAC move is considered a crucial endorsement of the India’s initiatives to usher in a common standard across the globe for spices trade.
- The adoption of Codex standards by CAC must be read in the context of the efforts put in by New Delhi in arriving at a common code for spices trade.
- India conducted three sessions of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) at Kochi (2014), Goa

(2015) and Chennai (2017).

- The Chennai session especially succeeded in achieving this consensus. Subsequently, these drafts were placed before the CAC and the member-nations adopted them by consensus.

## 2. [India's concerns slowing RCEP talks](#)

### India's concern

- India's concern is regarding the potential adverse impact of eliminating duties on its local manufacturing and job creation
- Effect: It said to be (by other members) slowing down the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations

### Other members view

- According to some of the members, most RCEP countries have agreed to quickly eliminate barriers affecting goods trade
- India is seeking more time to do so, and that is delaying the negotiations

### India's View

- According to CII, many countries were urging greater focus on duty elimination
- But India ought to highlight the need for removal of non-tariff barriers including those in China

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. [Petrol, diesel cars face ban in U.K.](#)

#### In news

- Britain will join other European nations in plans to ban diesel and petrol-fuelled cars in the coming decades.
- Commendable governments move to deal with high levels of air pollution and climate change.
- New diesel and petrol cars will be banned by 2040, as part of a package of measures designed to improve air quality in Britain, and meet tough EU rules on emissions, particularly around nitrogen dioxide emissions.
- Britain's high levels of air pollution, estimated to cause 40,000 deaths a year, has come under close scrutiny in recent years, with London breaching its annual air pollution limits under EU rules just 117 hours into 2017.
- The government says 4% of Britain's major roads are in breach of air pollution limits.
- Last year, Norway announced plans to phase out new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2025, via a green tax system, while France will end the sales of these vehicles by 2040. Germany's Bundesrat called for petrol vehicles to be phased out by 2030.

#### D. GS4 Related

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***Nothing here for Today!!!***

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

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

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## PRELIMS WORTHY FACTUAL INFORMATION





## WHAT MAKES ZEALANDIA A CONTINENT

**1 Gravity maps of the sea floor** have proved it is a continuous piece of continental crust

**2 Covers 1.9m sq miles**, about half the size of Australia, large enough to be a continent

**3 Rocks beneath the ocean floor** are **ancient rock types found only on continents**

**4 Continental shelves of Zealandia** are **shallower** than the nearby **oceanic crust**

➤ A continental shelf is the seabed area around a large land mass where the sea is shallow compared with the open ocean

➤ Oceanic crust is **thinner, denser, younger**; different composition than continental crust



Photo: IODP

JOIDES Resolution, the drilling ship for the survey

### EXPEDITION WILL...

**PROVE** the land mass is indeed a continent

**FIND CLUES** to how diving of one of Earth's plates beneath another fuelled a volcano chain

**MAP** how Earth-altering events changed ocean currents & the climate

### SCIENTISTS WILL DRILL UP TO 2,600 FEET UNDER THE SEABED

More than **30 scientists** set sail on **July 27** for the two-month Expedition 371 aboard the JOIDES Resolution, a massive scientific **drilling ship**

To visit **six sites** in the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand to **drill cores of sediment and rocks** from Earth's crust

Each core will be between **1,000 feet and 2,600 feet** into the seabed so scientists can "peer back in time" over tens of millions of years

### LONG LONG TIME AGO...

**100 million years ago**

Antarctica, Australia and Zealandia were one continent

**85 million years ago**

Zealandia split off on its own, separated from Australia

**50 million years ago**

The Pacific Plate dove beneath New Zealand, pushing up the two islands, forming a string of volcanoes in the Pacific

Graphic: Anil Dinod

## IN SEARCH OF THE 8TH CONTINENT

Earth's hidden eighth continent should be shown on maps, scientists have argued. Now, an expedition will dive into a plate that lies beneath another deep under the Pacific Ocean to find the contours of the 94% submerged continent - Zealandia, all we see of which is New Zealand and a few islands.

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

### Articles in News About the Articles

- The Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.
  - [(1A) The total number of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, in the Council of Ministers shall not exceed fifteen per cent. of the total number of members of the House of the People.
  - 1B) A member of either House of Parliament belonging to any political party who is disqualified for being a member of that House under paragraph 2 of the Tenth Schedule shall also be disqualified to be appointed as a Minister under clause (1) for duration of the period commencing from the date of his disqualification till the date on which the term of his office as such member would expire or

Article

75: Other provisions as to Ministers	<p>where he contests any election to either House of Parliament before the expiry of such period, till the date on which he is declared elected, whichever is earlier.]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.</li> <li>The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People.</li> <li>Before a Minister enters upon his office, the President shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the forms set out for the purpose in the Third Schedule.</li> <li>A Minister who for any period of six consecutive months is not a member of either House of Parliament shall at the expiration of that period cease to be a Minister.</li> <li>The salaries and allowances of Ministers shall be such as Parliament may from time to time by law determine and, until Parliament so determines, shall be as specified in the Second Schedule.</li> </ol>
Article 164: Other provisions as to Ministers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister, and the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor:          Provided that in the States of [Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand], Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, there shall be a Minister in charge of tribal welfare who may in addition be in charge of the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and backward classes or any other work.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[(1A) The total number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Council of Ministers in a State shall not exceed fifteen per cent. of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly of that State:              Provided that the number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister in a State shall not be less than twelve: Provided further that where the total number of Ministers including the Chief Minister in the Council of Ministers in any State at the commencement of the Constitution (Ninety-first Amendment) Act, 2003 exceeds the said fifteen per cent. or the number specified in the first proviso, as the case may be, then the total number of Ministers in that State shall be brought in conformity with the provisions of this clause within six months from such date* as the President may by public notification appoint.</li> <li>(1B) A member of the Legislative Assembly of a State or either House of the Legislature of a State having Legislative Council belonging to any political party who is disqualified for being a member of that House under paragraph 2 of the Tenth Schedule shall also be disqualified to be appointed as a Minister under clause (1) for duration of the period commencing from the date of his disqualification till the date on which the term of his office as such member would expire or where he contests any election to the Legislative Assembly of a State or either House of the Legislature of a State having Legislative Council, as the case may be, before the expiry of such period, till the date on which he is declared elected, whichever is earlier.]</li> </ul> </li> <li>The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly of the State.</li> <li>Before a Minister enters upon his office, the Governor shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the forms set out for the purpose in the Third Schedule.</li> <li>A Minister who for any period of six consecutive months is not a member of the Legislature of the State shall at the expiration of that period cease to be a Minister.</li> <li>The salaries and allowances of Ministers shall be such as the Legislature of the State may from time to time by law determine and, until the Legislature of the State so determines, shall be as specified in the Second Schedule.</li> </ol>

## G. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

### G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

#### GS Paper II

- India must calibrate both its message and military moves to keep Bhutan on track with the special bilateral ties. Discuss.
- Abortion Laws in India has not kept up with changes in science and society. It must be urgently amended. Comment?

#### GS Paper IV

- Discuss the various ethical issues involved in the recent new draft bill- the DNA Based Technology (Use and Regulation) Bill, 2017 proposed by the Law commission?
- Suppose one of your close friends, who is also aspiring for civil services, comes to you for discussing some of the issues related to ethical conduct in public service. He raises the following points:
  - In the present times, when unethical environment is quite prevalent, individual attempts to stick to ethical principles may cause a lot of problems in one's career. It may also cause hardship to the family members as well as risk to one's life. Why should we not be pragmatic and follow the path of least resistance, and be happy with doing whatever good we can?
  - When so many people are adopting wrong means and are grossly harming the system, what difference would it make if only a small minority tries to be ethical? They are going to be rather ineffective and are bound to get frustrated.
  - If we become fussy about ethical considerations, will it not hamper the economic progress of our country? After all, in the present age of high competition, we cannot afford to be left behind in the race of development.
  - It is understandable that we should not get involved in grossly unethical practices, but giving and accepting small gratifications and doing small favours increases everybody's motivation. It also makes the system more efficient. What is wrong in adopting such practices?

**Critically analyze the above viewpoints. On the basis of this analysis, what will be your advice to your friend?**

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Also, check previous [Daily News Analysis](#) .