



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 11-06-2024**

### **GS-1**

- 1. Nata Pratha**

### **GS-2**

- 2. Special Category Status**
- 3. MPLADS funds**
- 4. UN food agency**
- 5. Biopharmaceutical Alliance**

## **Nata Pratha**

### **Syllabus: GS-1; Art and Culture**

#### **Context**

- *NHRC seeks report on 'sale of underage girls' as part of 'Nata Pratha'*

#### **About**

- *Nata Pratha is practiced by **the Bhil tribe**, the one of the largest tribes in South Asia.*
- *Traditionally, both the man and the woman are supposed to be married or widowed, but the custom has evolved to include single people as well.*
- *It is a practice in which two persons can enter into a relationship similar to marriage without any legal and religious/social obligation by getting a divorce from existing marriage or otherwise.*

#### **The Misuse**

- *People have started misusing the Nata custom.*
- *The pre-condition to get into Nata is only when both the man and woman are married but nowadays we have come across cases where unmarried people have started living in together.*

#### **The concern**

- *The commission's research wing observed that the 'Nata Pratha' is comparable to modern forms of prostitution.*
- *Among various measures, it suggested that, besides enacting a law, individuals involved in forcing women into 'Nata Pratha' must be prosecuted under laws relating to **human trafficking**.*
- *The sale of minor girls should be prosecuted under the **POCSO Act**.*
- *It also suggested setting up a group at the village level to register cases of 'Nata Pratha' in addition to building awareness and **providing education and employment to improve the economic and social status of girls and women.***

#### **National Human Rights Commission of India**

- *The National Human Rights Commission of India is a statutory body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993.*
- *It was given a statutory basis by **the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA)**.*
- *The NHRC is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the act as "**Rights Relating To Life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual***

*guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in the international covenants and enforceable by courts in India".*

### **Functions of NHRC**

- *The Protection of Human Rights Act mandates the NHRC to perform the following:*
- *Proactively or reactively inquire into violations of human rights by government of India or negligence of such violation by a public servant*
- *The protection of human rights and recommend measures for their effective implementation*
- *Review the factors, including acts of terrorism that inhibit the enjoyment of human rights and recommend appropriate remedial measures*
- *To study treaties and other international instruments on human rights and make recommendations for their effective implementation*
- *Undertake and promote research in the field of human rights*
- *To visit jails and study the condition of inmates*
- *Engage in human rights education among various sections of society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for the protection of these rights through publications, the media, seminars and other available means*
- *Encourage the efforts of NGOs and institutions that works in the field of human rights voluntarily.*
- *Considering the necessity for the protection of human rights.*
- *Requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office.*

### **Composition**

- *The NHRC consists of the chairperson and five members (excluding the ex-officio members)*
- *A Chairperson, who has been a Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court.*
- *One member who is, or has been, a Judge of the Supreme Court of India and one member who is, or has been, the Chief Justice of a High Court.*
- *Three Members, out of which at least one shall be a woman to be appointed from amongst persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights.*
- *In addition, the Chairpersons of National Commissions viz., National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Women , National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights; and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities serve as ex officio members.*
- *The sitting Judge of the Supreme Court or sitting Chief Justice of any High Court can be appointed only after the consultation with the Chief Justice of India.*

## **Special Category Status**

**Syllabus: GS-2; the Constitution of India**

### **Context**

- *The demand for 'special category status' for Andhra Pradesh and Bihar is likely to get louder with the formation of a coalition government at the Centre.*

### **What is special category status?**

- *Special category status is a classification of regions or states by the central government to provide special assistance in the form of tax benefits and financial support for development of the region.*
- *It was first introduced in 1969 based on the recommendations of the **Fifth Finance Commission**.*

### **What are the criteria to provide special status to a state?**

*The criteria listed by the government include:*

- (1) hilly and difficult terrain*
- (2) low population density and / or sizeable share of tribal population*
- (3) strategic location along the borders with neighbouring countries*
- (4) economic and infrastructural backwardness and*
- (5) non-viable nature of state finances.*

### **Which states have special category status?**

- *In 1969, **three states** — Jammu & Kashmir (now a Union Territory after revocation of Article 370), Assam and Nagaland — were granted the special category status.*
- *Subsequently, **8 more states** have been granted such a status. It includes Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.*
- *Telangana was granted a special status tag after it was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014 by the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government.*

### **What are the benefits of special category status?**

- *States that come under special category status get preferential treatment in getting central assistance and tax breaks.*
- *For the implementation of the centrally-sponsored scheme, the special category status states are required to contribute just **10%** while the central government provides **90%** of the fund.*

- For other states the centre provides 60%-70% of the fund.
- Allotted money if not spent, lapse for the normal states, but in the case of special category states it is carried forward.
- Special category states are **provided tax breaks to attract investments.**
- They are also given **preferential treatment** in allocation of central funds assistance.

### Which are the states demanding special category status?

- Several states have been demanding special category status. Bihar has been pitching for special category status since it was bifurcated in 2000.
- To press for its demand Nitish Kumar-led JDU along with other allies had organised rallies in Patna and New Delhi in 2012 and 2013.
- Political parties from Andhra Pradesh have hit the road with multiple protests since 2014 demanding special category status.
- Other states that have been pitching for a special category status are Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

## **MPLADS funds**

### Syllabus: GS-2; Separation of Powers, Central Sector Schemes, Government Policies & Interventions

#### Context

- The Delhi High Court has held that the **Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)** has “no jurisdiction” to comment on the utilisation of Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds by MPs as the scope of the **Right To Information (RTI) Act** is limited to providing access to information under the control of public authorities.

#### About

- The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is a **Government of India program that gives Members of Parliament (MPs) up to Rs 5 crore per year to suggest development projects for their districts.**
- The funds are released in two installments of Rs 2.5 crore each, and are **non-lapsable**, meaning they can be carried over to the next year if not used.
- The funds can be used for projects such as:
  - Drinking water, Primary education, Public health, Sanitation, Roads, and Tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation.

- *MPs must also recommend that at least 15% of their funds be used to create assets in areas with Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 7.5% in areas with Scheduled Tribes (STs).*
- *The MPLADS scheme was **established in 1993**, and the amount of funds available to MPs has increased over time, from Rs 5 lakh in 1993-94 to Rs 2 crore in 1998-99.*
- **The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** *disburses the funds to district authorities, not directly to MPs.*
- *The district authority then identifies an implementing agency that can carry out the work in a timely, high-quality, and satisfactory manner.*
- *MPs can use the MPLADS e-SAKSHI mobile app to propose, track, and oversee projects in real time.*

## **UN food agency**

### **Syllabus: GS-2; International Institutions**

#### **Context**

- *UN food agency pauses aid work at US pier in Gaza over security concerns*

#### **The reason**

- *Saturday (08-06-2024) saw both an Israeli military operation that freed four hostages from Hamas captivity but was accompanied by deadly fighting, two of WFP's warehouses in Gaza had been "rocketed" and a staffer injured.*
- *The UN announcement of the pause appears the latest setback for the US sea route, set up to try to bring more aid to Gaza's starving people.*
- *The US Agency for International Development describes the pause as a step to allow for a security review by the humanitarian community in Gaza.*
- **USAID** *works with the World Food Program and their **humanitarian partners** in Gaza to distribute food and other aid coming from the US-operated pier.*

### **Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies Addressing Food Issues**

- **Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)**  
*The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) was established as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1945.  
One of FAO's strategic objectives is to help eliminate hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition.*
- **World Food Programme (WFP)**  
*Founded in 1963, WFP is the lead UN agency that responds to food emergencies and has programmes to combat hunger worldwide.*



*Reports of the WFP of its Executive Board and on its annual performance are linked above under ECOSOC.*

➤ **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

*Founded in 1977, IFAD focuses on rural poverty reduction, working with poor rural populations in developing countries to eliminate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.*

➤ **World Bank**

*Founded in 1944, the World Bank is actively involved in funding food projects and programmes.*

➤ **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

*The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972 as the international arm providing guidance and governance to environmental issues. One of the topics that UNEP addresses currently is food security.*

## **Biopharmaceutical Alliance**

**Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations**

**Context**

- **India, South Korea, Japan, the US, and the European Union** *launched an alliance to put joint efforts to build a resilient supply chain in the biopharmaceutical sector.*



**More to know**

- *The inaugural meeting of the Biopharmaceutical Alliance, held in San Diego during the **Bio International Convention 2024**, had representatives from government officials and bio and pharmaceutical companies from the participating countries.*
- *The alliance was launched in response to the drug supply shortages experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.*

### **Biopharmaceutical Sector**

- *Biopharmaceutical industry is the segment of business that uses biotechnology (biotech) to develop and manufacture medical therapies (biopharmaceuticals) and in vivo diagnostic processes.*

### **What are the 4 categories of biopharmaceutical products?**

- *The therapeutic types of biopharmaceuticals mainly include **recombinant protein therapy, antibody therapy, cell therapy, and gene therapy.***

### **What is the difference between biopharmaceutical and pharmaceutical?**

- *The main difference comes down to product manufacturing.*
- *Biopharmaceutical products are manufactured in living organisms, including white blood cells or bacteria.*
- *On the flip side, pharmaceutical products are manufactured using chemical-based processes.*