

## UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 21-02-2024

### Kapilvastu Relics

Four bone fragments of Lord Buddha, also known as Kapilvastu Relics, presently kept in the National Museum will be taken to Thailand after about 30 years.



#### About Kapilvastu Relics

- The relics were excavated from Piprahwa in the Siddharthnagar District of Uttar Pradesh, an erstwhile part of the ancient city of Kapilavastu.
- A British colonial engineer and an estate manager William Claxton Peppé discovered an inscribed casket in 1898 at the stupa site in Piprahwa.
- The inscription on the casket's lid refers to the relics of Buddha and his community, the Sakya.

#### History

- At the age of 80, according to Buddhist beliefs, Buddha attained salvation in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district.



- **The Mallas of Kushinagar cremated his body with ceremonies befitting a universal king.**
- **His relics from the funeral pyre were collected and divided into **eight shares to be distributed among the Ajathsatrus of Magadha, the Licchavis of Vaishali, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, Mallas of Kushinagar, Bullies of Allakappa, the Mallas of Pava, the Koliyas of Ramagrama and a Brahmana of Vethadipa.****
- The purpose was erecting stupas over the sacred relics.
- Two more stupas came up — one over the urn in which the relics had been collected and the other over the embers.

Thus, stupas erected over the bodily relics of Buddha (Saririkastupas) are the earliest surviving Buddhist shrines.

It is stated that Ashoka (circa 272–232 BCE) being an ardent follower of Buddhism, opened -up seven of these eight stupas, and collected major portion of the relics for enshrinement within innumerable (84000 stupas) built by him in an effort to popularize Buddhism and spread dharma.

## **Buddhism**

It is one of the world's largest religions and originated 2,500 years ago in India. Buddhists believe that human life is one of suffering, and that meditation, spiritual and physical labor, and good behavior are the ways to achieve enlightenment, or nirvana.

## **Section 91 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)**

Recently, the Supreme Court observed that the courts cannot issue processes under Section 91 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr.P.C) to compel the production of things/documents based on the application made by the accused at the stage of framing of charges.

### **About Section 91 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)**

- Section 91 of the CrPC empowers the court to issue a summons or a written order to produce a document or other material that is necessary for the purpose of any investigation, inquiry, trial, or other legal proceedings.



- Under this section, if the court considers that the production of any document or material is necessary or desirable for the administration of justice, it can issue a summons or written order to any person in possession of that document or material, directing them to produce it in court.
- Purpose: To ensure the availability of relevant evidence and materials during legal proceedings. This helps facilitate a fair and just resolution of the case by ensuring that the necessary evidence is presented before the court.
- Production of documents under Section 91: The document or material can be produced either in its original form or in the form of certified copies, as specified in the summons or written order.
- Compliance with the Section 91 order: The person receiving the summons must comply with it and produce the document or thing as required.

Section 91 does not cover the production of the following items:

Those listed under Sections 123 and 124 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (1 of 1872), or the Bankers Books Evidence Act, 1891 (13 of 1891), or a letter, postcard, telegram, or other document, or any parcel or thing in the custody of the postal or telegraph authority.

The court must be informed of the name of the person in whose possession or power the document is, or else the application for summons will not be entertained.

The term 'person' mentioned in the Section does not include an accused person in trial.

The police officers and courts are required to adhere to specific protocols and precautions while issuing and carrying out summonses under Section 91 CrPC.

For instance, they must abide by Sections 123 and 124 of the Indian Evidence Act, (1872), which protects the confidentiality and privilege of specific documents.

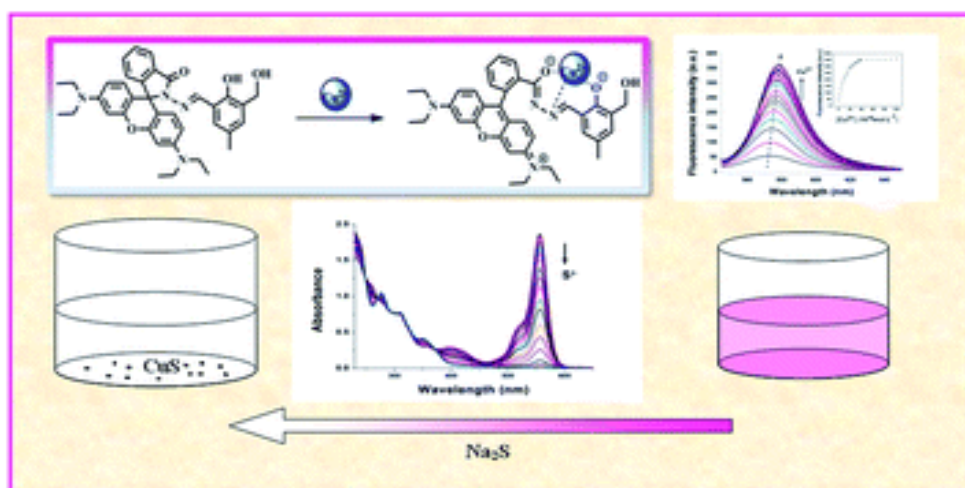
Additionally, they must offer the person called a fair amount of time and a chance to comply with the request.

## Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)

Enacted in 1973 (came into force on 1 April 1974), CrPC is the main legislation on procedure for administration of substantive criminal law in India. It provides a procedure for the investigation of crime, the collection of evidence, and the determination of guilt or innocence. The CrPC also covers the arrest and detention of suspects, the conduct of trials, and the sentencing of convicted individuals.

## Rhodamine-B

Recently, the Tamil Nadu government banned the sale and production of cotton candy in the state after it was found that the chemical Rhodamine-B was being used for making it.



### About Rhodamine-B

- It is a water-soluble chemical compound.
- While it appears green in powder form, it turns vivid fluorescent pink when it comes in contact with water.
- It is a chemical commonly used for dyeing in the textile, paper, leather, and paints industry as a coloring agent that helps in attaining the red and pink spectrum.
- "As per the Food Safety Standards Act, 2006, preparation, packaging, importing, selling and serving food items with Rhodamine-B in wedding ceremonies and other public events is a punishable offence.



- It is an industrial dye which is not allowed in food anywhere in the world as it is toxic.

### **Why is it harmful?**

- Researchers have identified that if food containing this chemical is consumed regularly, it can cause damage to the cerebellum tissue in the brain and to the brainstem that connects the brain to the spinal cord.
- These damages can lead to functional abnormalities and can hinder humans' motor functioning.
- The chemical is toxic for humans and can cause oxidative stress on cells and tissues if ingested.
- It becomes particularly hazardous when it is mixed with food products, leading to cancer and tumour over time.

### **What is dyeing**

A dyeing process is the interaction between a dye and a fibre, as well as the movement of dye into the internal part of the fibre. Generally, a dyeing process involves adsorption (transfer of dyes from the aqueous solution onto the fibre surface) and diffusion (dyes diffused into the fibre).

## **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

According to a new report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), at the current pace of growth, the region will not attain the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) until 2062 or will be 32 years behind schedule.

### **About United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

- It is the most inclusive intergovernmental platform in the Asia-Pacific region.
- It was established in 1947.



- Mandate: To promote economic and social development in the Asian and Pacific region by fostering cooperation between its members and associate members.
- The Commission promotes cooperation among its 53 member States and 9 associate members in pursuit of solutions to sustainable development challenges.
- It is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations.
- It carries out work in the areas like Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development, Trade, Investment and Innovation, Transport, Environment and Development, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction and Social Development etc.
- Headquarters: Bangkok, Thailand

### **What are Sustainable Development Goals?**

- These were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
- The SDGs framework sets targets for 231 unique indicators across 17 SDG goals related to economic development, social welfare, and environmental sustainability, to be met by 2030.
- The 17 SDGs are integrated; they recognise that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

### **United Nations**

It is an intergovernmental organization whose stated purposes are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and serve as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NPDS) Act, 1985?

CalendarToday

21-02-2024



timer

9 min read

Prelims: Polity & Governance

## **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**

In a significant legal development, the Supreme Court recently overturned an order granting anticipatory bail to a respondent accused under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act).

### **About Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**

The NDPS Act prohibits any individual from engaging in any activity consisting of the production, cultivation, sale, purchase, transport, storage, and/or consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.

#### **Objectives:**

To take measures for preventing, combating, and regulating operations relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

To provide for the forfeiture of property derived from or used in, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

To implement the provisions of the international conventions on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and for all relevant matters.

To add or omit the list of psychotropic substances.

What are Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances?

“Narcotic Drug” means coca leaf, cannabis (hemp), opium, poppy straw, and includes all manufactured drugs.

“Psychotropic substance” means any substance, natural or synthetic, or any natural material or any salt or preparation of such substance or material included in the list of psychotropic substances specified in the Schedule.

**Applicability:** The NDPS Act prohibits a person from manufacture / production / cultivation/ possession/ sale / purchase / transport / store / consume any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance without due permission from the appropriate authorities.



Punishment under the NDPS Act:

The Act follows a graded system of punishment, with the punishment varying and the quantum of punishment being dependent upon whether the offence pertains to small, commercial, and intermediate quantities of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

For offences involving commercial quantities of drugs, a minimum penalty of ten years of rigorous imprisonment is prescribed, which may extend to twenty years.

Repeat offences attract one and a half times the penalty and, in a few cases, even the death penalty.

By amendment to the Act in 1989, due to the serious nature of the offence, the sentence awarded under the NDPS Act became non-commutable except for the sentence awarded for the consumption of drugs.

Alongside these stringent provisions, the Act has procedural safeguards as follows:

**Personal search:** Any person being searched has a right to be searched before a Gazetted Officer or a Magistrate (Section 50).

**Searches:** Gazetted Officers of the empowered Departments can authorize searches. Such authorization has to be based on information taken down in writing.

Searches can be made under certain circumstances without a warrant (from a magistrate) or an authorization (from a Gazetted Officer).

**Arrests:** The person who is arrested should be informed, as soon as may be, the grounds of his arrest [Section 52(1)].

If the arrest or seizure is based on a warrant issued by a magistrate, the person or the seized article should be forwarded to that magistrate.

The officer who arrests a person has to make a full report to his official superior within 48 hours.

**Immunities:**

**Officers:** Officers acting in discharge of their duties in good faith under the Act are immune from suits, prosecution, and other legal proceedings.





**Addicts:** Addicts charged with consumption of drugs or with offences involving small quantities will be immune from prosecution if they volunteer for de-addiction. This immunity may be withdrawn if the addict does not undergo complete treatment.

**Offenders:** Central or state governments can tender immunity to an offender in order to obtain his evidence in the case. This immunity is granted by the government and not by the court.

**Juvenile offenders:** Juvenile offenders (below 18 years of age) will be governed by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000.

### **Immunities to diplomats as applicable.**

#### **Anticipatory bail**

It is the bail granted to a person in anticipation and apprehending arrest. Under Section 438 of CrPC, any individual who discerns that he may be tried for a non-bailable offense can apply for anticipatory bail. The application shall be made to the High Court or Sessions Court, where the crime is alleged to be committed. Anticipatory Bail is bail before the arrest, and the police can't arrest an individual if the Court has granted anticipatory Bail.

#### **INDUS-X**

The 'INDUS-X' summit between India and the United States, organized by India's Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and the US Department of Defence in collaboration with the US-India Business Council and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM), is set to take place in Delhi.

#### **About INDUS-X (India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem)**

A joint initiative between India and the United States to foster collaboration and innovation in the defence sector.

Focuses on areas like artificial intelligence, cyber security, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and maritime systems.

#### **Goals**

**Promote joint R&D:** Develop advanced defence technologies through collaborative projects.

**Establish joint R&D challenges and funds** for specific technological areas.



Facilitate technology transfer and sharing of expertise.

Facilitate co-production & co-investment: Increase defense manufacturing collaboration between Indian and US companies.

Identify opportunities for joint production of defence equipment.

Encourage co-investment in defence projects and startups.

Expand participation of startups & SMEs: Support the growth of innovative defence companies in both countries.

Create incubation centres and mentorship programs for startups.

Organize technology showcases and investor matchmaking events.

Strengthen defence innovation ecosystems: Build robust infrastructure and support mechanisms for defence innovation.

Develop talent pipelines and training programs for defence professionals.

Foster collaboration between academia, industry, and government.

Launch

June 2023

Announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit to the US.

Key Players

India: Ministry of Defence (MoD), Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

United States: Department of Defense (DoD)

Supported by various research institutions, industry associations, and investment firms.

### **Key Initiatives**

Joint R&D Challenges:

Ongoing challenges in areas like AI-powered battlefield management, secure communication systems, and advanced materials.

Innovation Hubs:

Physical hubs in Bangalore and San Francisco to connect innovators and investors.



Virtual platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Mentorship Programs

Matching Indian startups with US mentors and investors for guidance and funding. - Facilitating technology transfer and commercialization.

Technology Showcases:

Regular events showcasing innovative defence technologies from both countries.

### **Opportunities for networking and potential partnerships.**

#### **Benefits**

Enhanced defence capabilities: Access to cutting-edge technology and improved interoperability.

Stronger deterrence against shared threats and regional stability.

Increased economic opportunities: Job creation, technology transfer, and market access for companies.

Boost innovation ecosystems and economic growth in both countries.

Stronger strategic partnership: Enhanced cooperation and trust between India and the US.

Demonstrates commitment to a rules-based international order and regional security.

#### **Challenges**

Bureaucratic hurdles & regulatory differences: Streamlining approval processes and harmonizing standards.

Ensuring transparency and accountability in joint projects.

Equitable participation & benefits: Addressing concerns about technology transfer and intellectual property rights.

Balancing interests of large companies and startups.

Building trust & confidence: Overcoming historical mistrust and ensuring information security.

Fostering closer collaboration between defence establishments.



## Future

INDUS-X is expected to play a significant role in:

Deepening India-US defence cooperation and technological collaboration.

Accelerating innovation in the defence sector and fostering a vibrant startup ecosystem.

Contributing to regional security and stability.

Success depends on continued commitment from both governments and the active participation of stakeholders.

Regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure effectiveness and address challenges.