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# NEWS JUICE

Intelligent Compilation from The Hindu, Indian Express & others along with News Background

## NEWS HEADLINES

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## What is News Juice?

BY PREPMATE



## 1. A long road for migrant workers

### Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

The Supreme Court on June 29 pronounced its judgment in the migrant labourers case. The case was initiated last year after the national lockdown was announced on March 24. Thousands of landless labourers had started walking towards their home States due to the loss of employment and income. The Supreme Court took cognisance of the matter on May 26 that year and acknowledged the plight of the workers in light of the strict lockdown.

The court has laid down numerous guidelines to provide relief to workers and efficiently tackle the problem till the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Two of the most important components to protect the migrants during this time were the food and travel arrangements insisted on by the court. In the orders pronounced in May this year, it laid down that dry ration be provided to migrants who want to return to their homes. Further, the court said that identity proof should not be insisted upon by the governments since the labourers might not be able to furnish it. Secondly, the court called upon the State governments to arrange transportation for workers who need to return to their homes. These guidelines by the court are crucial to ensure the safety of workers.

The Supreme Court fixed July 31 as the deadline for the States to implement the 'One nation One Ration Card' scheme. Under this scheme, the States are to complete the registration of migrant workers in order to provide dry ration to them. But it is unlikely that a standardised system can be developed within the deadline prescribed by the court.

Apart from dry ration, the top court also directed the State governments to run community kitchens for migrant workers. However, there arise administrative problems in implementing these measures. First, migrant workers keep moving in search of employment and it is difficult to cover them all under the scheme. Second, many States do not have the necessary infrastructure to run and maintain community kitchens on such a large scale.

### Important directives

Under the National Food Security Act, migrant workers are issued ration cards and they are entitled to dry ration under various government programmes, such as the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme, during the pandemic. In the order passed on June 29, the court affirmed the Right to Food under Article 21 of the Constitution. In furtherance of this, the court asked the States to formulate their own schemes and issue food grains to migrants. This is an indispensable step to keep more than a fourth of the population of the country safe and healthy during the pandemic.

However, there are no normative data that would allow the States to identify eligible migrants. The court took cognisance of the issue and directed the Ministry of Labour and

Employment to ensure that the National Database for Unorganised Workers is updated by July 31.

Finally, the top court recognised the need for direct cash benefit transfer to workers in the unorganised sector. But it did not issue any guidelines for the same as the workers need to be covered by the States themselves.

The Supreme Court has given a purposive declaration in the case but the bulk of the judgment seems declaratory rather than mandatory. In order to efficaciously implement the orders of the court, the State governments need to work with the Centre closely. With the third wave of COVID-19 infections looming, it is imperative to ensure that government machinery works to its full potential and robust systems are developed to withstand the challenges.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **2. Tracking fugitives everywhere**

**Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Polity & Governance**

Indian law on extradition is spread across the Indian Penal Code as well as various laws pertaining to narcotic drugs, Information Technology, hijacking, and so on. Procedural laws have the Code of Criminal Procedure as their backbone but there are other laws too, such as the Extradition Act, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Prevention of Money Laundering, and so on.

### **Investigation and prosecution**

The bulk of the investigation and prosecution work happens at police stations in the States, while Central agencies take up the important cases. Central agencies have developed reasonable expertise because they are focussed only on investigation and prosecution work, whereas State police forces (except specialised wings) are engaged in law-and-order work as well as investigations. There is a tendency to close investigations once the accused have absconded, and an overwhelming tendency to bank on statements obtained from the accused or during interrogation before closing investigations. It would be interesting to know what proportion of arrest warrants obtained by investigation agencies of States pertain to persons who have absconded or are 'wanted', whether within India or abroad. Some police stations do initiate proceedings for attachment of property and declaration of the accused as proclaimed offenders, but the number of cases where coordinated efforts are made to pursue fugitives – domestically or internationally – are hardly documented. If the number of Red Corner Notices issued are of any indication, only about 750 such criminals are wanted by Indian agencies. The number of Blue Corner Notices issued is about 300.

Theoretically there exists a system of tracking criminals worldwide – through Interpol Notices and the sharing of immigration databases of different countries – but there is no coordinated system or database for tracking criminals or wanted persons domestically. In the absence of such a system, it is relatively easy for criminals from one police station/jurisdiction to melt into the population in any other area, almost undetected.

### **Requirements**

The creation of a nationwide database of wanted persons, which could be accessible for police agencies, the public and others (like passport and immigration authorities), is imperative. The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems and the National Intelligence Grid are efforts in the right direction, but more integration is desirable. Perhaps a nation-wide system of 'Wanted Persons Notices', similar to Interpol Notices, is required, to help track fugitives domestically. Countries like the U.S. have functional inter-State extradition and fugitive tracking systems; India needs to set up such dedicated 'fugitive tracking units'. There needs to be enhanced integration between immigration agencies, State police agencies, Interpol-New Delhi, the External Affairs Ministry and Home Ministry and central investigation agencies. Intelligence agencies also need to pool in.

What may also help India plug loopholes is sharing its 'wanted' database or providing access to it to foreign embassies on a reciprocal basis or through treaties or arrangements. All this will help detect possible plans of criminals to abscond abroad.

Signing of more bilateral and multilateral conventions on criminal matters would help plug legal infirmities. Signing bilateral agreements on cooperation in policing matters would also help. All relevant legal processes and requirements should be incorporated into one consolidated law on international cooperation.

The entire gamut of activities pertaining to fugitives, from investigation to extradition, needs to be incorporated into a specialised set-up with an Integrated International Cooperation Division (IICD) at the top. The IICD should have linkages with proposed fugitive tracking units at the State level. This would ensure that requisite expertise and forward-and-backward linkages are created. Making systems watertight would deter criminals from hoodwinking the law.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **3. What's happening in Haiti where the President was assassinated?**

### **Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Issues**

Jovenel Moïse, Haiti's 53-year-old President, was assassinated at his private residence in Port-au-Prince early on Wednesday by unidentified gunmen, pushing the Caribbean nation, already battered by months-long protests, economic miseries and the COVID-19 outbreak,

into further chaos. On Thursday, the country's police chief said four suspects were killed in a gun battle and two others were arrested.

### **What do we know about the assassination?**

Haiti's interim Prime Minister Joseph Claude Joseph announced on Thursday that Moïse was assassinated at his home and the First Lady Martine Moïse was injured. He said some of the attackers spoke Spanish, indicating that foreign mercenaries were involved. Haiti is a French- and Creole-speaking country. Mr. Joseph has not offered any more details. According to local media, Moïse's body had been riddled with 12 bullets. Police chief Leon Charles said four suspects had been killed and the police were chasing others. "They will be killed or captured," he said on Thursday, but has not disclosed the identity of the suspects nor has he offered any evidence linking them to the plot. It still remains a mystery how the attackers, whoever they were, walked to a presidential residence, shot him dead and then walked out freely.

### **Who was Jovenel Moïse?**

Moïse, a former banana plantation manager who called himself "Banana Man", rose to political fame when he contested the 2016 presidential election. He came to Port-au-Prince, the capital of the Caribbean country, from the countryside and presented himself as an outsider who could fix the country's politics and economy. Haiti, the world's first independent Black-led republic, after slaves successfully revolted against Napoleon Bonaparte's forces in 1803, has a long, painful history of foreign interventions, coups, dictatorships and not-so-successful democratic experiments. In 2010, the country was battered by a devastating earthquake that killed at least 300,000 people. Moïse promised a new beginning by strengthening institutions and ending corruption, and won the election in the first round itself. But under his administration, the political and economic situation in Haiti further deteriorated.

### **Why was Moïse targeted?**

While the motive of the assassination is not clear yet, Moïse was at the centre of a turmoil that had engulfed Haiti over the past many years. Moïse was elected President in November 2016. The presidential election was scheduled to be held in 2015, but postponed several times amid unrest and other crises. President Michel Martelly, whose term expired on February 7, 2016, stepped down without a clear successor. Moïse could not take office until February 7, 2017 as his 2016 election was marred by allegations of fraud and protests. According to Haitian Constitution (Article 134-1), "the duration of the presidential mandate is five years. This period begins and ends on February 7, following the date of elections". Opposition leaders claimed that Moïse's five-year term ended on February 7, 2021 as Mr. Martelly stepped down on February 7, 2016. But Moïse said he has one more year in office as he officially took over on February 7, 2017. This was the crux of the political crisis.

As Moïse refused to step down on February 7, the Opposition called for countrywide protests. They also appointed a parallel government with Joseph Mécène Jean-Louis, a Supreme Court Judge, being the interim President. Moïse called it a coup and arrested

nearly two dozen Opposition leaders. He was largely ruling by decree as his government failed to conduct legislative elections in 2019. As Haiti fell into chaos, violence by armed gangs spread across the country. Moïse promised that he would hold legislative and presidential elections within a year, but also took steps to rewrite the country's Constitution. Moïse said the post of Prime Minister, which is not an elected one, wielded enormous powers, which he wanted to clip. Opposition leaders said he was also looking for removing a clause in the Constitution that bars Presidents from seeking re-election so that he could contest again. The political crisis was worsened by an economic contraction and the spread of COVID-19.

### **Who is now in charge?**

According to the Haitian Constitution, the head of the Supreme Court should temporarily take over the government if the President abruptly departs. But the Supreme Court President Rene Sylvestre died last month of COVID-19 and that position is still vacant. In the wake of a power vacuum, the National Assembly could select a new leader. But there is no National Assembly as elections have not been held after the last Parliament's term expired. That leaves Mr. Joseph in charge. But there's a problem. The late President had announced on Monday that he was replacing Mr. Joseph with Ariel Henry, a neurosurgeon with close ties to the Opposition. Mr. Henry was expected to take over as Prime Minister on Thursday. However, it is not clear whether the transition would happen amidst the current crisis.

Mr. Joseph has already taken control of the government, declared a state of emergency, put the military in charge of security and restricted media coverage of the incident. He says the authorities are in control. But most Haitians, including its leaders, are still in shock. The crisis has just started unfolding in the country.

**Source: The Hindu**

## **4. How a clip of Andy Murray's historic Wimbledon win sold for over a crore via NFTs**

### **Relevant for GS Prelims**

The craze for sporting memorabilia has gone digital. Athletes and organisations worldwide are cashing in on their significant victories and spectacular highlights by launching NFTs — blockchain-based unique digital collectibles with a simple mantra: scarcity equals value. And the rarer the win, the better. Ask Andy Murray, whose 'moment' of ending Britain's 77-year wait for a men's champion in 2013 fetched a Rs 1.32cr on Monday.

That amount got the buyer the video clip of Murray's match-winning point. Other sports collectibles NFT on sale include pins, posters and highlights. Mind you, unlike tangible collectibles such as jerseys, trading cards, balls and bats to be displayed in a showcase,



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these limited-edition NFT images, videos and artwork are only available as a digital asset. Those buying can claim the 'ownership' even if there are multiple copies of the same clip or image available online.

### **What are NFTs?**

Essentially a digital collectible, NFT stands for non-fungible token, which means non-replaceable. Unlike cash or bitcoin — which are fungible assets and can be interchanged with something of equal value, like other currencies — an NFT has unique properties and cannot be traded with something else. Think of it as a one-of-a-kind trading card which you can only trade for money or a different card. Or Mona Lisa. Once you sell it, it's gone. You can take photos or duplicate prints of the painting, but it wouldn't be the original.

They are digital assets which can be bought and sold but have no physical form. While digital media files ('jpeg' photos or animated 'gifs') can be saved and duplicated endlessly, buying an NFT means you have a certificate of ownership for the original artwork.

Though they have been around since 2014, NFTs took off last year along with the crypto craze with their market value tripling and crossing \$250 million. In the first quarter of 2021, the NFT sales exceeded \$2 billion.

In February, an animated meme 'Nyan Cat' sold for approximately \$590,000. In March, Twitter's founder Jack Dorsey sold his first tweet as an NFT for \$2,915,835.47. Artists, musicians, film studios and even academics have tapped into the world of NFT. Earlier this month, the original source code for the world wide web was sold as an NFT for \$5.4m.

### **Who are the athletes launching NFTs?**

Two former Wimbledon champions announced their forays into NFTs during this year's tournament.

On Monday, the "moment" of Andy Murray's 2013 Wimbledon win was auctioned for \$177,777, with Reuters reporting that an NFT enthusiast known as 'Pranksy' claimed to be the buyer. Though they will not own the copyright of the video clip they bought, the buyer will receive as bonuses a small digital screen to play the video, two tickets to Centre Court for the 2022 men's Wimbledon finals, a chance to play tennis with Murray and signed souvenirs.

In addition to the main "moment", WENEW also sold more than 600 limited-edition NFT collectibles — capturing other short clips like his trophy lift, interview, 2012 runner-up speech, and shot highlights — priced between \$49 and \$4,999.

"I'm still learning about NFTs but it feels like an exciting area and one I'm sure more athletes and content creators will be getting involved in," the former world No. 1 told Reuters.

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Last week, tennis legend Bjorn Borg put on auction an NFT titled 'No Time to Think' — a 3D digital sculpture (signed by Borg) interpreting the Swede's emotions upon winning the 1980 Wimbledon final against John McEnroe.

"For me to be involved with those emotions again with technology and art together, I think that's very interesting," Borg, 65, told Bloomberg. "It's a new area for me. But I think this is definitely going to be part of the future."

In June, former Pakistan cricketers Wasim Akram and Shoaib Akhtar also announced the launch of limited-edition collectibles.

### **Are only individual athletes launching NFTs?**

Teams, leagues and organisations around the world are putting up NFTs for sale.

The NBA kickstarted the revolution with reported earnings of \$500 million in the first quarter of 2021. Through the 'Top Shot' NFT marketplace, basketball fans can purchase video highlights and trade with others. In April, a LeBron James dunk highlight was secured for \$387,600 through an auction. The Golden State Warriors later began issuing their own collection of digital championship rings and ticket stubs.

Football collectibles are also on sale, with a platform called Sorare enlisting world's top clubs. Through Sorare, a user called camembert bought unique Zinedine Zidane and Cristiano Ronaldo NFTs; the latter for \$289,920.

"I would personally never buy a Picasso but I was very happy to invest \$300,000 in my idol," the buyer posted in the feedback section.

Last month, the International Olympic Committee made available digital versions of past Olympic pins, featuring the posters, emblems, pictograms, and mascots from previous editions. Those interested can buy 'packs' of pins priced between \$9-\$499 depending on the rarity.

Of course, IOC is also banking on the subset of hardcore fans — 'pin-traders' who travel from host city to host city, looking to trade pins with other collectors.

### **Any downside to this upward trend?**

There are the usual fears associated with a market of rapidly-rising prices. With buyers splurging big on virtual items, there's the risk of big losses of the speculative bubble bursts. The NBA Top Shot prices and sales have plunged, with the February-April sales decline at 60 per cent.

The biggest criticism however is the NFTs impact on the environment. The blockchain technology which ensures ownership of a collectible — and functions similarly in the cryptocurrency network — has been under fire for its massive energy consumption and



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carbon footprint. In February, researchers at Cambridge said that the crypto network consumes around 121.36 terawatt-hours (TWh) a year — an electricity consumption more than Argentina (121 TWh), the Netherlands (108.8 TWh) and the United Arab Emirates (113.20 TWh).

**Source: The Indian Express**



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