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

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What is News Juice?
BY PREPMATE
1. Why the lack of compliance with Sports Code is landing a lot of federations in trouble

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

* On Thursday, the Delhi High Court summoned the joint secretary of the sports ministry for overlooking the violation of the National Sports Code by the federations, and hinted at strict actions against erring associations.

* On May 26, the court hinted that if the federations continued to violate the rules, it would order the government to stop their funding.

* A day before, the same Delhi High Court bench had pulled up Hockey India for flouting the sports code and appointed a three-member Committee of Administrators, led by former chief election commissioner SY Quraishi, to look after its day-to-day affairs.

* A week earlier, the Supreme Court ended Praful Patel's term as All India Football Federation's (AIFF) president for, once again, violating the sports code. It took control from the AIFF and transferred it to a three-member CoA, led once again by Quraishi.

* In February, the Delhi High Court suspended the executive committee of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) and constituted a CoA, chaired by former Jammu & Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal, to run the federation.

If these precedents are anything to go by, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), which has been accused of not complying with the sports code, could be in trouble as well when the Delhi High Court passes its order, which was reserved for April 12.

So, why are the courts intervening in the running of sports federations? In their order dated May 26, Justice Najmi Waziri and Justice Vikas Mahajan have tried to answer this question. They noted that, in essence, it is to seek 'compliance by NSFs (National Sports Federations) with the Sports Code and orders passed by the courts.'

"Twelve years is a long time to enable sports bodies to conform to the Sports Code," the judges wrote in their order, referring to the first petition made to make federations accountable back in 2010. “The time to stop is now.”

What is the Sports Code?

It is a set of regulations passed by the government in 2011, which enunciated the ‘basic universal principles of good governance, ethics and fair play.’ The Sports Code seeks to put restrictions on the age and tenure of the office-bearers of federations apart from envisaging transparent functioning along with free and fair elections.

Why is it important for the federations to comply with it?

As sports lawyer and activist Rahul Mehra, who is also the petitioner in the ongoing case in the Delhi High Court, said: “It's about following the law of the land.” The Delhi High Court order, too, noted the same. "Non-compliance with the regime of the law," it stated, "is clearly against public interest."

Who is responsible for ensuring that the federations follow the Sports Code?

The Court holds the government responsible for ensuring that all federations are compliant with the Sports Code. In 2014, a Delhi High Court bench – which included Justice Waziri – held that the government can ‘insist upon adherence to these provisions (sports code), without the aid of legislation' and added that the sports code provisions were ‘neither arbitrary’ nor did they ‘violate any freedom under the Constitution.’

What are the consequences of not following the sports code?
The court has said that a federation that does not follow the guidelines should be suspended. Additionally, it has also suggested that grants given to the federations should be stopped. “There can be no let-up or latitude in this regard, as relaxation would be arbitrary, illegal and lend to dilution of the Sports Code. No NSF or Sports Entity should be seen to be receiving benefits which are unjust,” the court noted.

**What benefits do the federations receive?**
Most athletes are now funded directly by the government, instead of routing it via the federations. However, the federations still get plenty of grants such as ‘tax benefits, travel concessions, accommodation and hospitality accorded to players and officials of NSFs, use of government-owned stadia and sports facilities, etc.’ “Fairness and legitimacy need to imbue all governmental affairs. Therefore, it is prudent, indeed imperative that no further exemptions be granted to or lenience be shown to noncompliant NSFs,” the court has noted.

**How many federations have been accused of not adhering to the code?**
Last year, the court had asked the sports ministry to file an affidavit indicating the status of compliance with the Sports Code by 41 national federations. That information, the judges noted, has still not been provided. In its order on May 26, the court asked the sports ministry to examine the constitutions of the federations of ‘gymnastics, handball, national yogasana, tennis, volleyball, mallkhamb and motor sports as well as equestrian, rowing, golf, squash racket, yachting, polo’. If they are found violating the sports code, the order read that ‘directions/ notices shall be issued apropos suspension of their recognition.’

**Why has action been taken against hockey, football and table tennis federations and why is a CoA constituted to run these sports?**
In the case of table tennis, the Delhi High Court – hearing the petition filed by CWG medalist Manika Batra alleging match-fixing by coaches – said the federation ‘safeguarded the interests of its officials’ and ‘instead of promoting players, TTFI is dictating terms.’ Consequently, it suspended the federation and appointed a CoA.

In football, the Supreme Court said the AIFF did not comply with the sports code and constituted a three-member CoA to amend and finalise the federation’s constitution accordingly. Hockey India’s executive committee was suspended after the Delhi High Court, hearing a petition filed by former India hockey captain Aslam Sher Khan, found multiple violations of the sports code, including the appointment of IOA president Narinder Batra as a life member of Hockey India. Subsequently, Batra said he won’t seek re-election as IOA president.

**Do the administrators get paid for their roles?**
They do. The three-member table tennis CoA is entitled to Rs 5 lakh per month, including Rs 3 lakh to the chairperson. In hockey, the court ordered that ‘a deposit of Rs 3 lacks per month shall be made with each CoA member to meet expenses, etc.’ The remuneration of the CoA for the AIFF has not been made public yet.

**Has the CoA been successful in ensuring accountability?**
Not entirely. In the case of the BCCI, the CoA was accused by many of failing to implement the reforms proposed by Justice RM Lodha.

**Source: The Indian Express**

2. Which is the largest plant in the world, spread over 20,000 football fields?

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Environment

The world’s largest plant has recently been discovered off the West Coast of Australia: a seagrass 180 km in length.
But stretching across 150 km — which is about the distance between Mumbai and Pune — is not even the only remarkable thing about the plant.

The ribbon weed, or Posidonia australis, has been discovered in Shark Bay by a group of researchers from Flinders University and The University of Western Australia. These researchers have also found that the plant is 4,500 years old, is sterile, has double the number of chromosomes than other similar plants, and has managed to survive the volatile atmosphere of the shallow Shark Bay.

**So how remarkable is this plant's size?**
The ribbon weed covers an area of 20,000 hectares. The next on the podium, the second largest plant, is the clonal colony of a quaking Aspen tree in Utah, which covers 43.6 hectares. The largest tree in India, the Great Banyan in Howrah’s Botanical Garden, covers 1.41 hectares.

**If it is so large, how come it has just been discovered?**
The existence of the seagrass was known, that it is one single plant was not. Researchers were interested in what they then thought was a meadow because they wanted to study its genetic diversity, and collect some parts for seagrass restoration.

The University of Western Australia quotes UWA student researcher and lead author of the study, Jane Edgeloe, as saying that the team “sampled seagrass shoots from across Shark Bay’s variable environments and generated a ‘fingerprint’ using 18,000 genetic markers.”

“The answer blew us away – there was just one!” Edgeloe was quoted as saying. “That’s it, just one plant has expanded over 180km in Shark Bay, making it the largest known plant on earth.”

The findings were published in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B.*
How did it grow, and survive for, so long?
Sometime in the Harappan era, a plant took root in the Shark Bay. Then it kept spreading through its rhizomes, overcoming everything in its way, and here we are today.

Ribbon weed rhizomes can usually grow to around 35cm per year, which is how the scientists arrived at its lifespan of 4,5000 years.

The researchers found that the ribbon weed cannot spread its seeds, something that helps plants overcome environmental threats. Also, Shark Bay sees fluctuations in temperature and salinity and gets a lot of light, conditions challenging for any plant.

Yet the ribbon weed has managed to survive, and a part of the reason may be that it is a polyploid – instead of taking half-half genome from both parents, it took 100 per cent, something not unheard of in plants. Therefore, this ribbon weed has twice the number of chromosomes other plants of the same variety have.

“Polyploid plants often reside in places with extreme environmental conditions, are often sterile, but can continue to grow if left undisturbed, and this giant seagrass has done just that,” the University of Western Australia quoted Dr Elizabeth Sinclair, a senior author of the study, as saying.
**All that is cool, but why should I be excited about some grass in Australia?**
Because seagrass performs a vital role in the environment, and if some of it is hardy, it is good news for everyone in a world threatened by climate change.

In India, seagrass is found in many coastal areas, most notably in Gulf of Mannar and Palk Strait. Apart from being home to a variety of small organisms, seagrass trap sediments and prevent water from getting muddy, absorb carbon from the atmosphere, and prevent coastal erosion.

The Shark Bay ribbon, thus, has served as sinkhole, hospitable city, and firewall for centuries. And it has done all this without mating, so maybe it has one more distinction – being one of the oldest champions of sologamy.

**Source: The Indian Express**

### 3. Textbook controversy in Karnataka

**Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Social Issues**

The Karnataka textbook revision committee, headed by Rohith Chakrathirtha, has included a speech by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) founder K.B. Hedgewar in the Class 10 Kannada (first language State syllabus) textbook. Works by several authors associated with the progressive stream in Kannada literature have been left out. As a mark of protest, many writers have written to the BJP government withdrawing permission to use their works in textbooks. In another development, seers associated with the Veerashiva-Lingayat and Vokkaliga castes, two powerful communities of Karnataka, have raised objections to some comments of Mr. Chakrathirtha.

**What is the genesis of the controversy?**
When COVID-19 struck two years ago, to manage the burden of a heavy syllabus in a truncated academic year, the government reduced 30% of the syllabus for all classes. In the process, lessons on Tipu Sultan, Sangolli Rayanna, Rani Chennamma and a few other historical figures were excluded for that year from the social science syllabus of Class 6 to Class 8.

Around the same time, the Karnataka Brahmin Mahasabha submitted a memorandum to the Primary and Secondary Education Minister B.C. Nagesh and Commissioner of the Department of Public Instruction demanding revision of some lessons in the Class 6 and Class 8 social science textbooks which they said “hurt the sentiments of the Brahmin community.” On the basis of this memorandum, the government formed a 16-member textbook revision committee and appointed Mr. Chakrathirtha as the chairperson in September 2021. Initially, the government had announced that the committee would only revise Class 6 and Class 8 social science textbooks which “hurt community sentiments.” However, eventually, the committee was given the responsibility of all the textbooks from Classes I to 10. The committee took around six months and submitted its report to the government in March, 2022.

**What are the major changes in the textbooks?**
While Hegdewar’s speech was added, the committee dropped texts of writers P. Lankesh, Sara Aboobacker, Aravind Malagatti, Neela, B.T. Lalita Naik, A.N. Murthy Rao among others, known for their progressive views. The committee included works of writers including Bannanje Govindacharya, Shatavadhani R. Ganesh, S.L. Bhyrappa and others. Inclusion of a chapter by Chakravarthi Sulibele, a strong defender of the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was among the highlights. A chapter on Bhagat Singh authored by Marxist scholar G. Ramakrishna, initially dropped, was later restored.

There was outrage over dropping portions that spoke of social reformer Narayana Guru, Periyar and others, while the government in its defence said they were not dropped but only juggled between texts to make them more contextual. The manner in which details about Basaveshwara as well as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar were edited in Class 9 textbooks has also drawn criticism.
What has been the response to the revisions?
Writers identified with progressive streams, Dalit organisations, student unions and others across the State protested against the “saffronisation” and “Brahminisation” of textbooks. Over 10 writers, including Devanooru Mahadeva and Prof. Ramakrishna, have told the government that they do not wish their writings included in the textbooks revised by the committee. Opposition Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) and other parties have also opposed the changes.

Vokkalia community organisations, leaders and mutt seers like Dr. Nirmalanandanathana Swamiji have demanded action against Mr. Chakrathirtha on the grounds that he has in the past defamed Jnanpith awardee and literary icon Kuvempu, who belonged to the community, by sharing a distorted version of the “nada geethe” (State anthem) penned by Kuvempu. Various Veerashiva-Lingayat seers have taken exception to the content on Basaveshwara, the 12th century philosopher-poet-social reformer and a proponent of Lingayat philosophy, which has now been partially addressed by a promise to revise it. Dalit organisations are unhappy with the portrayal of B.R. Ambedkar, on which the government has made no promises. Some old tweets and social media posts of Mr. Chakrathirtha have been questioned over their alleged anti-women and casteist stances. Critics also questioned his qualification to head the committee, which the government vociferously defended.

What is the government saying?
The BJP government in Karnataka, which had earlier stuck to its stand that there was no question of rolling back the changes, late on Friday showed signs of buckling under pressure from religious heads. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai’s statement that the government had an “open mind” followed a prolonged discussion with Minister B.C. Nagesh. While Mr. Bommai announced that the material related to Basaveshwara would be “suitably altered in order not to hurt sentiments”, there is no sign of anything else being changed in the textbooks so far. The government in its statement emphasised that the revision committee has been disbanded — the purpose for which it was set up has been met and its term has ended.

Source: The Hindu

4. What are the latest guidelines on monkeypox?

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

India’s Health Ministry has issued guidelines on the management of the monkeypox disease. So far, no cases of the virus have been confirmed in India but reports of the virus’ spread in non-endemic countries have led to guidelines being issued.

What do the guidelines say?
The 23-page document, available on the Health Ministry website, is an information sheet that lists out the global prevalence of the disease as of May 31, its epidemiology or disease characteristics including the kind of virus that causes the disease, its likely origins, incubation period, how long before symptoms manifest and so forth.

It also highlights how long it takes to subside, modes of transmission, symptoms, the probable modes of exposure, the test to confirm the presence of the virus, the government’s surveillance strategy in place to identify cases and clusters of infection.

What are the most important recommendations?
The guidelines recommend that contacts be monitored every day for the onset of signs/symptoms for a period of 21 days (as per case definition) from the last contact with a patient or their contaminated materials during the infectious period. Suspected cases of monkeypox include a person of any age with a history of travel to affected countries within the last 21 days and presenting an unexplained acute rash and one or more of symptoms, including swollen lymph nodes, fever, head/body ache and profound weakness.

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Other symptoms include pain in the eye or blurring of vision, shortness of breath, chest pain, difficulty in breathing, altered consciousness, seizure, decrease in urine output, poor oral intake and lethargy.

A case of monkeypox is confirmed in a laboratory by detection of unique sequences of viral DNA either by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and/or sequencing, much like a test for COVID-19. However, there are no commercial tests for monkeypox yet and all clinical specimens are to be transported to the apex laboratory of the ICMR-NIV (Pune) routed through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network of the respective district/State.

There is no treatment protocol or medicines specific to monkeypox and a patient has to be managed on the basis of the symptoms they present. For instance, dehydration ought to be treated with oral fluids; fever with sponging and paracetamol, nausea and vomiting with antiemetics.

How prevalent is monkeypox globally?
The World Health Organization has said that cases of monkeypox have been reported from 12 member states that are not endemic for monkeypox virus. Reported cases thus far do not have established travel links to endemic areas. Based on currently available information, cases were mainly, but not confined to, men who have sex with men (MSM) seeking care in primary care and sexual health clinics.

To date, all cases whose samples were confirmed by PCR testing have been identified as being infected with the West African clade of the virus. The genome sequence from a swab sample from a confirmed case in Portugal, indicated a close match of the monkeypox virus causing the current outbreak, to exported cases from Nigeria to the U.K., Israel and Singapore in 2018 and 2019.

Countries where the virus was endemic are, according to the WHO, Benin, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ghana (identified in animals only), Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan.

Are there vaccines?
Historically, vaccination against smallpox had been shown to be protective against monkeypox. While one vaccine (MVA-BN) and one specific treatment (tecovirimat) were approved for monkeypox, in 2019 and 2022 respectively, they aren't widely available. A vaccination with smallpox is said to be protective against monkeypox but this vaccine would be in individuals over 40-50 years of age, who’ve been inoculated with the smallpox vaccine and here too it’s unclear how long lasting the protection is.

Source: The Hindu

5. Are fears of stagflation impacting markets?

Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Authorities worldwide, particularly central bankers, are feverishly trying to formulate the appropriate set of policies to ensure that inflation, currently running at multi-decade highs in some advanced economies including the U.S., is cooled without triggering a recession. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke told The New York Times last month that he foresaw a period in the near future “where growth is low, unemployment is at least up a little bit and inflation is still high”, adding, “So you could call that stagflation”.

What exactly is stagflation?
Most economists typically focus on the three key macroeconomic gauges to assess the health of an economy. Economic output measured by gross domestic product, the level of unemployment and thirdly inflation or the pace at which the prices of goods and services are rising in the economy.
The challenge for policymakers, especially central banks, is to ensure optimum conditions whereby output grows at a healthy pace, helping businesses in the economy to create jobs at a steady pace and thus keeping unemployment low, and most crucially having all of this happen in an atmosphere when prices remain relatively stable.

However, in the real world, more often than not, high economic growth invariably spurs faster inflation which is why many central banks have a specific mandate of ensuring that the pace of price gains does not exceed a specified target level or range.

The most difficult and messy problem for policymakers is when inflation runs high even as economic output either stagnates or, worse, shrinks. The slowdown in economic activity, in turn, leads businesses to shed jobs and the resultant situation is termed as ‘stagflation’.

**How does it manifest?**

One of the classic instances when most economies including the U.S. faced ‘stagflation’ was during the ‘oil shock’ of the early 1970s when an embargo led by the oil producers’ cartel OPEC caused the price of crude to almost quadruple in a period of just under six months.

“Countries like the U.S. that imported a lot of oil experienced both high inflation and recession,” Veronika Dolar, an Assistant Professor of Economics at SUNY Old Westbury in the U.S., wrote in an article published by the online journal The Conversation in March. “The Consumer Price Index exceeded 10% for the first time since the 1940s, unemployment jumped from 4.6% in 1973 to 9% in 1975, and the GDP plunged,” she observed.

**What has sparked the latest concerns about stagflation?**

While the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the curbs imposed to contain the spread of the virus caused the first major recent economic slowdown worldwide, the subsequent fiscal and monetary measures taken to address the downturn, including substantial increases in liquidity in most of the advanced economies, fuelled a sharp upsurge in inflation.

While the Fed and the Bank of England are among central banks that have started raising interest rates to cool soaring prices, the ongoing war in Ukraine following Russia’s invasion of its southern neighbour and the consequent Western sanctions on Moscow have caused a fresh and as yet hard-to-quantify ‘supply shock’.

With the prices of commodities ranging from oil and gas to foodgrains, edible oils and fertilizers all surging sharply in the wake of the conflict, authorities face an uphill battle to contain inflation that is now less a function of demand (and so can be controlled by regulating credit) and almost entirely caused by supply factors that are far harder to manage.

To add to the concerns, several business leaders including Tesla’s Elon Musk and JP Morgan Chase & Co.’s Jamie Dimon are warning of an impending ‘recession’.

**What lies ahead?**

Current Fed Chairman Jerome Powell summed it last month at the post-federal open market committee press conference when asked if a recession was inevitable to tame inflation. “Basically, we’ve been hit by historically large inflationary shocks since the pandemic. This isn’t anything like regular business… it’s been a series of inflationary shocks that are really different from anything people have seen in 40 years. So we have to look through that and look at the economy that’s coming out the other side. And we need to somehow find price stability out of this. And it’s obviously going to be very challenging.”

**Source:** The Hindu

**6. Why are FPIs dumping Indian stocks?**

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Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been on a selling spree in India. May figures of about ₹44,000 crore formed the highest monthly quantum of sell-off since March 2020 when India announced a nationwide lockdown. Last month was also the eighth on the trot that FPIs had sold net of their assets — i.e., sold more than they had purchased. Their selling actions have triggered a significant decline in benchmark indices resulting in a drop in market capitalisation of companies.

What are FPIs?
Foreign portfolio investors are those that invest funds in markets outside of their home turf. Their investments typically include equities, bonds and mutual funds. They are generally not active shareholders and do not exert any control over the companies whose shares they hold. The passive nature of their investment also allows them to enter or exit a stock at will and with ease.

What factors spur FPI moves?
Promise of attractive returns on the back of economic growth draws investors including FPIs into a country’s markets. For example, as per data from the National Securities Depositories Ltd. (NDSL), FPIs brought in about ₹3,682 crore in 2002. This grew to ₹1.79 lakh crore in 2010. This correlates with the concurrent expansion of economic output in that period, despite the 2008 global financial crisis which saw FPI sell-offs in that time-frame in the country. The year 2017 saw FPI inflows exceed ₹2 lakh crore.

Likewise, FPIs withdrew ₹1.18 lakh crore in March 2020 alone — the month when India announced a nationwide lockdown, triggering concerns around economic growth. In tandem, benchmark stock index Sensex fell from 42,270 in February 2020 to 25,630 in March 2020.

FPIs also show keenness to invest in bonds when there is a favourable differential between the real interest rates on offer in the country they aim to invest in, and other markets, but more specifically, compared with the largest economy in the world, the U.S.

Why have FPIs been selling India holdings?
FPIs sold assets worth ₹44,000 crore in May 2022. This is the second highest sell-off in a month since 1993, after March 2020. Post-pandemic, recovery in the Indian economy has been uneven. The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 devastated lives and livelihoods. The economy stuttered again when a third, albeit less severe, wave saw the spread of the Omicron variant early this year. Add to this the return of pent-up demand in economies worldwide as the pandemic subsided. The pace of recovery caught suppliers off guard, contributing to supply-side shortages.

Even as industry was grappling with this challenge, Russia launched an attack on Ukraine. Sunflower oil and wheat supplies, for example from these two nations were impacted, leading to a rise in global prices for these crops. As supplies in general tightened across the globe, commodity prices too rose and overall inflation accelerated. India witnessed a quickening pace in price rise that stayed above the Reserve Bank’s upper comfort level of 6% for four months running, touching 7.8% in April. Industrial production too has seen a bumpy ride without giving confidence of a full and final recovery from the pandemic. Consumption expenditure too has remained weak in the subcontinent.

With each of these factors contributing to a decline in confidence of robust economic performance, foreign portfolio investors have been reducing market investments over these past months. Add to the mix the U.S. Federal Reserve raising the benchmark interest rate starting March this year. The key rate went up from 0-0.25% in March to 0.75-1% in May and is expected to rise by 50 basis points at each of the next two Fed meetings. When the differential between the interest rates in the U.S. and other markets narrows, and if such an occurrence is accompanied by the strengthening of the dollar, then the ability of investors to realise
healthy returns is impacted. For returns are measured not only by the value appreciation of assets but also by exchange rate changes. If the dollar strengthens against the rupee, then an investor is able to realise fewer dollars for a given quantum of rupee assets liquidated. Further, if inflation quickens in the overseas market where the investor has placed funds, then the real returns are even further impacted. They then tend to exit assets seen as ‘risky’ such as in emerging markets like India, Brazil or South Africa.

**What impact does an FPI sell-off have?**

When FPIs sell their holdings and repatriate funds back to their home markets, the local currency takes a beating. After all, they sell rupees in exchange for their home market currency. As supply of the rupee in the market rises, its value declines. In this instance, the rupee has recently been seeing all-time lows. About a year ago, it was trading in the region of 73 to a U.S. dollar; it is now flirting with the 78 level. With a weaker rupee, we have to shell out more funds to import the same unit of goods. The most telling impact is on the cost of our crude oil imports that contribute to 85% of our oil needs.

*Source: The Hindu*

**7. What 46-km flight in Gujarat could mean for future of drone delivery**

**Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology**

In what potentially lays the ground for postal delivery by drones, Gurugram-based drone startup TechEagle delivered a parcel this week in Gujarat under a pilot project in collaboration with India post.

**DELIVERY & PURPOSE:** The drone flight delivered a parcel in the Kutch region of Gujarat, travelling a distance of 46 km in less than 30 minutes. In a statement, TechEagle said that this was five times faster than the speed of surface transportation. Notably, the drone delivery was among the longest single delivery flights made by a drone in the country. It travelled when the wind speed was up to 30 kph.

Last month, the company launched a hybrid-electric vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) drone called ‘VertiplaneX3’ with a payload capacity of 3 kg, a range of 100 km and a top speed of 120 kph. The VTOL drone has the capability to take off and land vertically like a helicopter from a small area of 5mx5m.

Anshu Abhishek, co-founder-COO at TechEagle, said the project was aimed at enabling faster deliveries across the country, be it in urban cities or any rural village. “The learnings from the project would help stakeholders to scale up and commercialise the drone delivery of mail across the country,” he said.

**OTHER TRIALS:** Bengaluru-based logistics and delivery platform Swiggy last month began deployment of drones on a trial basis to make deliveries from its grocery service Instamart. For these trials, which are being conducted in two phases, the company has roped in four ‘drone-as-a-service’ operators, of which TechEagle is one.

Several other drone operators have partnered with state governments and other authorities to conduct trials of vaccines and healthcare supplies deliveries through drones. Logistics services company Delhivery in December announced the acquisition of California-based Transition Robotics, which develops drone platforms.

Globally, internet giant Alphabet’s drone delivery unit Wing recently delivered its first consignment in a major US metropolitan area by supplying boxes of medicines from Walgreens in Dallas, Texas.

*Source: The Indian Express*

**8. How ceramic implants can regenerate broken bones**
Relevant for GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

When people need a bone replacement following a fracture, it is often based on a metal part. But metal parts are sometimes toxic over time, and will not help the original bone regrow.

Calcium phosphate ceramics, the Tokyo Medical and Dental University (TMDU) noted in a press release, are in principle an ideal alternative to conventional metals because bone can eventually replace the ceramic and regrow. Calcium phosphate ceramics are substitutes for the bone mineral hydroxyapatite. However, applications of such ceramics in medical settings have been limited, because there is insufficient control over the rate of absorption and replacement by bone after implantation.

Now, in a study recently published in Science and Technology of Advanced Materials, researchers from TMDU and collaborators have studied the transformation of a ceramic into the bone mineral. This work will help move bone regeneration research from laboratories to medical use.

“Medical professionals have long sought a means of healing bone fractures without using implanted medical devices, but the underlying science that can make this dream a reality isn’t yet fully elaborated. Our careful analysis of the effect of the ceramic’s ester alkyl chain length on hydroxyapatite formation, in a simulated body fluid, may help develop a novel bone-replacement biomaterial,” the release quoted lead author Taishi Yokoi as saying.

The researchers have reported that most of the studied ceramics underwent chemical transformations into particulate or fibrous hydroxyapatite within a few days.

“We now have specific chemical knowledge on how to tailor the rate of hydroxyapatite growth from calcium phosphate ceramics. We expect that this knowledge will be useful for bench researchers and medical practitioners to more effectively collaborate on tailoring bone reformation rates under medically relevant conditions,” Yokoi was quoted as saying.

The releases said the results of this study are important for healing bone fractures after surgery. By using chemical insights to optimise the rate of bone reformation after implantation of calcium phosphate ceramics, patient outcomes will improve, and returns to the hospital years later for further repairs will be minimised, it said.


Source: The Indian Express

9. Rule 10(a) of the BJP constitution, invoked to suspend spokesperson Nupur Sharma

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

Faced with a backlash in Gulf countries, the BJP on Sunday (June 5) took the extraordinary step of suspending two of its spokespersons for their remarks on Islam and the Prophet.

In the case of one of the two leaders, national spokesperson Nupur Sharma, the BJP, which sees itself as a disciplined and cadre-based party, invoked Rule 10(a) of its constitution as reason for the action.

In a letter to Sharma, Om Pathak, Member Secretary, Central Disciplinary Committee of the BJP, said: “You have expressed views contrary to the party’s position on various matters, which is in clear violation of Rule 10(a) of the Constitution of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I have been directed to convey to you that pending
further inquiry, you are suspended from the party and from your responsibilities/ assignments if any, with immediate effect.”

**Religion in the BJP’s constitution**

Article II of the BJP’s constitution lays down the “objective” of the party, which was formed in 1980 by the members of the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh who left after the collapse of the Janata Party experiment.

The objective of the BJP says: “The party aims to establish a democratic state, which guarantees to all citizens irrespective of caste, creed or sex, political, social and economic justice, equality of opportunity, and liberty of faith and expression.”

The party constitution contains 34 articles. Along with filling in party membership forms, one has to take a pledge that “I subscribe to concept of Secular State and nation not based on religion... I undertake to abide by the Constitution, Rules and discipline of the Party.”

**The rules of the party**

Article XXV-5 states: “National Executive will frame rules for the constitution of Disciplinary Committee at different levels for deciding matters relating to violation of discipline.” The rules are listed at the end of the constitution, along with details of the necessary action, and the process of action.

A 10-part process is listed as part of “disciplinary Action” in case of breach of discipline. Six types of breach of discipline are listed.

**Rule10(a) of the BJP constitution**

Rule 10 gives extraordinary powers to the party president to discipline members. It says: “The National President if he so desires, may suspend any member and then start disciplinary proceedings against him.” It is under this rule that Sharma has been suspended even before an inquiry against her.

Para (a) under “Breach of Discipline” states: “Acting or carrying on propaganda against programme or decision of the Party.”

Under the rules, “Disciplinary Action Committee of not more than 5 members will be constituted... Committees shall draw their own procedures; State Disciplinary Action Committee can take action only against units subordinates to it...;”

“On receipt of a complaint, the National President or the state president...may suspend an individual or a Unit followed by a show-cause notice within a week of the said order;

“Maximum 10 days' time from the date of receipt of such notice may be given to a person to reply...;”

“Committee will submit its report to the President in not more than 15 days...”

**Source: The Indian Express**
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