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1. When the Supreme Court stepped in against bail conditions imposed by various high courts

Why in News?

The Supreme Court recently ruled that imposing a bail condition that prevents a person from participating in political activities violates their fundamental rights under the Constitution.

In doing so, a bench of Justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta set aside such a condition set by the Orissa High Court in an earlier order for BJP leader Siba Shankar Das.



First, how bail and bail conditions work

Bail refers to the temporary prison release of a person awaiting trial or an appeal. It is secured by depositing security before a legal authority as a guarantee for his eventual presence in court.

While exercising its discretion to release a person on bail, the court must ensure it acts "judiciously", the Supreme Court observed in 'Khilari vs. State of UP' (2009). It also ruled that the appellate court must record its reasons while granting bail.

Additionally, Section 439 of the CrPC states that a high court or court of session can direct any accused person in custody to be released on bail.

It also allows them to impose any condition that they consider necessary for the purposes of Section 437(3), which lists conditions that can be imposed in cases of offences punishable with

seven years or more in prison. These include ensuring the accused doesn't commit a similar offence and that he doesn't threaten persons associated with the case.

What was the Orissa HC order?

In 'Siba Shankar Das @ Pintu vs. State of Odisha' the apex court was dealing with a petition filed by BJP leader and former Berhampur mayor Siba Shankar Das. He challenged an earlier order of the Orissa HC.

On January 18, the HC rejected Das's plea to withdraw a condition imposed on him on August 11, 2022, for granting him bail in a criminal case. The High Court's condition said that "the appellant shall not create any untoward situation in public and shall not be involved in any political activities, directly or indirectly."

Das argued before the HC that as a political person who was earlier elected as the Berhampur Municipal Corporation's mayor, he should be allowed to participate in political activities, given the upcoming general elections.

However, the state government contested Das's plea, arguing that after his release on bail, Das had been involved in new cases and a "murderous attempt" was also made against him, where a bomb was hurled onto his vehicle. It also supplied the court with an affidavit from the local police inspector, objecting to Das's plea and citing two new FIRs registered against him in October 2023.

Observing that the petitioner "is always under a life threat", a bench of Justice B.P. Routray said that lifting the condition "at this juncture, shall in all probability put the administration to enough difficulties." The court also added that Das was allegedly involved in 57 cases earlier. Challenging this order, Das moved the top court.

What did the top court rule?

On March 22, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court set aside the Orissa HC order, saying that "imposition of such condition would breach the fundamental rights of the appellant and no such conditions could have been imposed." Subsequently, the court said it was quashing and setting aside the condition.

However, this wasn't the first time the top court quashed bail conditions it deemed unreasonable.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

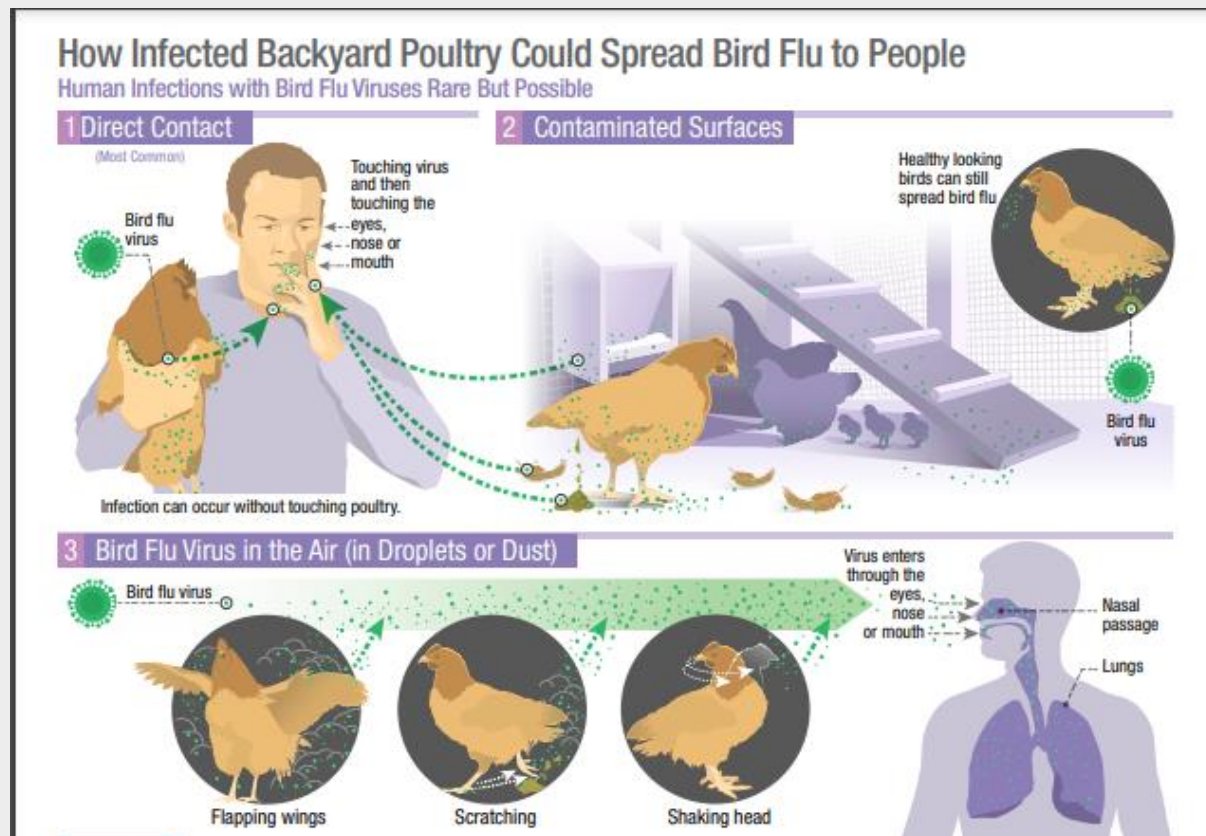
2. How the H5N1 bird flu threatens the existence of birds and mammals

Why in news?

Since 2020, a highly pathogenic type of bird flu, H5N1, has been spreading across the globe, posing an existential threat to birds and wildlife. The virus has infected birds in more than 80 countries (as of December 2023) and resulted in culling of millions of chickens and turkeys at

commercial poultry farms. It also struck numerous species of wild birds, such as gulls and terns, killing them by thousands.

The more worrying sign, however, is the rapid spread of the flu — once largely confined to birds — among mammals. For instance, tens of thousands of seals and sea lions in different parts of the world have died due to the disease. The infection has also infiltrated mainland Antarctica for the time in history.



Humans are also at risk but they rarely contract bird flu. Most of the cases of human infection involve people who have come in contact with a large number of sick birds at poultry farms. This means that humans are likely to get infected when there is a huge viral load.

What is bird flu?

Bird flu, also known as avian flu, refers to an infectious viral illness that mainly infects and spreads among poultry and some wild birds. There are different strains of bird flu virus, which have been circulating for a very long time among at least 100 bird species, including wild waterfowl, such as ducks and geese, without much harming them.

From time to time, a form of the flu virus jumps from wild birds to poultry farms, and replicates in cramped warehouses of farmed birds. It then quickly evolves into a highly pathogenic flu virus that causes a larger wave of illness and death than usual among birds.

The currently circulating type of H5N1 is one such highly pathogenic flu virus. It has “descended from a virus that caused an outbreak on a goose farm in Guangdong, China, in

1996. That virus — one of a type of virus known as H5N1 — was highly pathogenic and killed more than 40 per cent of the farm birds it infected.

Spread of H5N1

The new version of H5N1 first emerged in Europe in 2020 and then rapidly reached Africa, and Asia. By late 2021, it had spread to North America and in the fall of 2022, it appeared in South America. In February 2024, the virus stormed through mainland Antarctica.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. How will T+0 settlement cycle benefit investors, which securities are eligible?

Why in news?

The BSE and NSE introduced trading in the T+0 rolling settlement cycle in the equity segment on an optional basis. The beta version of the optional T+0 settlement cycle, or same-day settlement, was launched for a set of 25 scrips, and with a limited set of brokers.



What is the T+0 trading settlement cycle?

In December last year, the capital markets regulator SEBI proposed to introduce a facility for clearing and settlement of funds and securities on T+0 (same day) on an optional basis, in addition to the existing T+1 settlement cycle.

Under the T+0 trade cycle, the settlement of trades will happen on the same day after the closure of the T+0 market. If investors sell a share, they will get the money credited to their account the same day, and the buyer will also get the shares in their demat account on the very day of the transaction.

What are the benefits of T+0 trade settlement?

A shortened settlement cycle will bring cost and time efficiency, transparency in charges to investors, and strengthen risk management at clearing corporations and the overall securities market ecosystem.

The T+0 trade cycle is expected to provide flexibility in terms of faster pay-out of the funds against the securities to the sellers and faster pay-out of securities against the funds to the buyers. It will allow better control over funds and securities by the investors.

For the securities market ecosystem, a shorter settlement cycle will further free up capital in the securities market, thereby enhancing the overall market efficiency. It will enhance the overall risk management of Clearing Corporations (CCs) as the trades are backed by upfront funds and securities.

What are the trade timings?

For the optional T+0 settlement cycle, there will be one continuous trading session from 09:15 AM to 1:30 PM. The settlement of funds and securities will be completed on the same day by 4:30 PM.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express

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