



+91-9989966744 / 9000066690  
Email:targetiasweb@gmail.com  
H.No. 1-10-196 (New No.177)  
Ashok Nagar X Road, Hyderabad  
Telangana 500020.

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# DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

**09.04.2021**

FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
  - To have a bank of mains questions.
  - And interesting to read.
  - Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH  
INDIAN EXPRESS - IE  
BUSINESS LINE - BL  
ECONOMIC TIMES - ET  
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI

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## ESSAY PAPER

### EDITORIAL

**Q-Explain how Allahabad High Court's quashing of NSA orders underlines failure of institutional safeguards?**

**INTRODUCTION** = When a law is used to curtail individual freedoms in a constitutional democracy, crucial checks and balances must kick in to draw the red lines that protect against state arbitrariness. This is especially so when the state wields a law as harsh as the National Security Act, which gives it powers to arrest without formal charge or trial.

### **Preventative detention in layman's terms**

“the imprisonment  
of a person with the aim of preventing  
them from committing further offences  
or of maintaining public order.”  
- The Oxford Dictionary

So if the police have reason (and evidence) to support the belief that a person is likely to or going to commit a crime, they would be allowed to 'detain' that person to 'prevent' the crime.

#### **Arguments**

<p><b>For:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is expected to reduce the murder rate</li> <li>• 'Desperate times call for desperate measures': Jamaica's very high crime rate and the increase in murders require extraordinary action</li> <li>• 'Prevention is better than cure': As the name suggests, it will stop crime before it happens by detaining perpetrators</li> </ul>	<p><b>Against:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights: Is it fair to essentially lock someone up because you think they're likely to commit a crime?</li> <li>• No clear guidelines for how to decide that a person is a would-be offender, which therefore leaves it up to the police officer's personal judgement</li> <li>• Further victimisation of the poor, stereotyped or marginalised groups in society (prejudice &amp; profiling)</li> </ul>
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Information sourced from diGJamaica: ow.ly/ufGz3e8RceJ

In Uttar Pradesh, over the last three years, this newspaper has investigated and found, **out of the 120 habeas corpus petitions that came before it under the NSA, more than half of them citing cow slaughter and communal incidents**, the preventive detentions of 94 individuals were struck down by the Allahabad High Court.

Behind those statistics lies a story of the disturbing failure of systemic safeguards, of constitutional protections not kicking in when and where they should have — while quashing NSA orders across 32 districts, and calling for the release of the petitioners, the court's orders showed that -

1. There were cut-and-paste police FIRs in multiple locations,
2. “Non application of mind” by the district magistrates,
3. Denial of due process to the accused and repeated use of the law to block bail.

There is a dismal pattern here. At the same time, however, the pushback by the Allahabad HC also frames the one important check that did work — that did come to the rescue of the individual against the transgressing state.

In asking questions, in pointing to the questions not asked by the detaining authorities, the high court was upholding, in letter and spirit, constitutional guarantees and the promise made by the higher judiciary — that preventive detention under NSA must be strictly construed keeping in mind the “delicate balance between social security and citizen freedom”.



### Way Forward -

The Supreme Court has called for –

1. “Meticulous compliance with the procedural safeguards”.
2. In case after case, and especially in those related to cow slaughter and communal incidents — issues that have often been politically weaponised to target members of the minority community in the state — the balance was abandoned, and available safeguards given the go-by.

Example - “Slaughtering and consumption of beef per se cannot attract the provisions of the National Security Act... It would be an offence under the provisions of the Cow Slaughter Act”, the HC observed in the detention of Shahid Qureshi, on April 4, 2019. How was the act a disturbance of public order, there is “no reference of petitioner being involved in any serious or any anti-national activity”.

**The overall message underlined by the Allahabad High Court — “the individual liberty granted to the petitioner by the Constitution of India cannot be taken away without proper application of mind” — must be heeded. By the district magistrates who passed orders in a mechanical manner, in some cases only on the basis of police reports, in others showing signs of being swayed by political pressures. The court orders should also be read carefully by the state government. The people’s mandate casts a responsibility to make the institutional safeguards stronger and better, it does not give any government the licence to bypass them.**

### GS 3

#### ❖ Science & Technology

**Q- What is the origin and virality of the Double mutant’ strain named B.1.617?**

**BACKGROUND** = According to a note from the INSACOG, the consortium of laboratories that is sequencing a sample of genomes from COVID-19 patients in India, B.1.617 was first detected on

December 7, 2020. The “double mutant” virus that scientists had flagged last month as having a bearing on the spread of the pandemic in India.

The variant is common in India — how much in every State is unclear though — and has a couple of defining mutations, E484Q and L425R, that enable it to become more infectious and evade antibodies.

TWIN BLOW

The discovery of the faster-spreading strain may force the Centre to impose curbs on public gatherings and add to the pressure on health infrastructure.

 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #e91e63; font-size: 0.8em;">When were the samples taken?</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">10,787 samples were taken from patients infected with the novel coronavirus across states since December last year</p>	 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #e91e63; font-size: 0.8em;">What was detected?</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">15-20% of the samples contained an unknown new strain which has been detected for the first time. It most likely originated within India.</p>	 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #e91e63; font-size: 0.8em;">Why is this a cause for concern?</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">The new strain is highly infectious and has the potential to skip immunity developed either by natural infection or vaccination.</p>	 <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #e91e63; font-size: 0.8em;">Which are the other mutants in India?</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;"><b>B.1.1.7:</b> 736 cases of UK strain were detected <b>B.1.351:</b> 34 cases of the South Africa strain were found <b>P.1:</b> 1 case of the Brazil variant was also detected</p>
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### Distribution -

Though these mutations have individually been found in several other coronavirus variants, the presence of both mutations together were first found in some coronavirus genomes from India. Certain variants of the coronavirus, for instance, B.1.1.7 and B.1.351 — have been termed the “United Kingdom” and “South Africa” variant, respectively, because they have mutations associated with large spikes in these countries or reduce the efficacy of vaccines and are termed “variants of concern (VOC)”.

Though now present in at least eight countries, nearly 70% of the genome sequences that have the mutations characterising B.1.617 and submitted to the global database GISAID (Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data) are from India. This is followed by the United Kingdom (23%), Singapore (2%) and Australia (1%).

“That suggests that this variant is fairly common in India. It is worrying because the mutations E484Q and L425R are linked to increased infectivity. It’s been linked to 20% of the cases in Maharashtra but we have to also see the role of the variant (from further genome studies) in say West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh where there are massive crowds from elections and the Kumbh Mela [respectively].

An explainer note by the INSACOG on the significance of the mutations says that it has as many as 15 “lineage defining mutations”. Other than the two mutations, there is a third significant mutation, P614R. All three concerning mutations are on the spike protein, the operative part of the coronavirus that binds to receptor cells of the body.

### Resistant to T cells

L452R, some studies show, could even make the coronavirus resistant to **T cells, a class of cells necessary to target and destroy virus-infected cells.**

India has not yet conducted studies on how vaccine efficacy is influenced by variants, except for limited laboratory trials, but international studies have shown reduced efficacy of vaccines — particularly those by Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax — to certain variants. However, the vaccines continue to be significantly protective in spite of this.

So far, **only three global VOCs have been identified: the U.K. variant, the South African and the Brazilian (P.1) lineage.**

### Way Forward -

- A scientist associated with the INSACOG said vaccine makers should now be accounting for the variations in the spike protein in designing future vaccine.
- “That’s the real purpose of genomic analysis. To design appropriate vaccines but so far there are hardly such studies out of India,”

### Snippets

#### ❖ Economic Development

#### **Q- What is the aim of RBI by introducing the G-sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP 1.0)?**

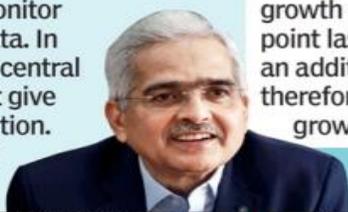
- The Reserve Bank of India recently announced a Government Security Acquisition Programme, GSAP 1.0. Under the programme, the central bank will purchase government bonds of worth Rs 1 trillion (or one lakh crores of rupees). The first purchase of Rs 25,000 crore is to be made on April 15, 2021.
- Government Securities are debt instruments that are issued by GoI to borrow money. There are two types namely short-term instruments that mature in 91 days and long-term instruments that mature anywhere between five years and forty years.
- The central bank will purchase five types of government securities via a multi-security auction using multiple price methods. The dates of maturity vary from November 2, 2023 to March 16, 2035.
- The GSAP 1.0 will provide more comfort to the bond market. As the borrowing of the Government increased this year, RBI has to ensure there is no disruption in the Indian market.

### **GROWTH IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE**

“ For the time being and at the current juncture, growth is of paramount importance, while of course keeping in mind inflation targeting is also important. The primary goal of the monetary policy is to maintain a certain level of inflation

“ In today’s conditions, there is no need for a moratorium.. We regularly monitor asset quality data. In any situation, a central bank should not give a knee jerk reaction. And we will not take it either

“ The current surge is not likely to impact growth so much as it did at this point last year. The vaccine is an additional factor. We have therefore reiterated our 10.5% growth projection for FY21



**Shaktikanta Das |**  
GOVERNOR, RBI

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1. The programme will help to reduce the spread between repo rate and the ten-year government bond yield.
2. It will also help to reduce aggregate cost of borrowing for the centre and states in fiscal year 2022.



**Which of the following constitute the criteria for devolution regarding the 15th Finance Commission?**

1. Income tax collections
2. Forest and Ecology
3. Status of Law and Order
4. Income Distance
5. Population(2001)

**Choose the correct option:**

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 2 and 4 only
- c. 1,3 and 5 only
- d. 4 and 5 only



**A fast petrol vessel PS Zoroaster that helps in carrying out anti-piracy operations is being gifted by India to which of the following nation that has been a steady part of India's policy for the Indian Ocean region?**

- a. Sri Lanka
- b. Maldives
- c. Madagascar
- d. Seychelles

**Answer – D**

**NOTE:** The fast petrol vessel PS Zoroaster will help the Seychelles in carrying out anti-piracy operations. The vessel, built by the Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineering Limited, was delivered to Seychelles on March 16 and will be dedicated to the Seychelles Coast Guard by Prime Minister Modi during the virtual interaction.

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