

NEWS TODAY

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE (PSC) ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FLAGS CONCERNS OVER DNA BILL

- DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 which was introduced in Lok Sabha in July, 2019 had been referred to a PSC for examination.
- Bill provides for **regulation of use of DNA technology and creating a national DNA database for solving crimes and identifying missing persons.**

Key provisions	Concerns/ Suggestions
DNA profiles can reveal extremely sensitive information of an individual such as skin colour, behaviour, health status etc.	Access to such information can be misused to incorrectly link a particular caste/community to criminal activities.
Provides for consent before taking the DNA sample in several provisions , but in each of those, a magistrate can easily override consent.	There is no guidance on grounds and reasons of when magistrate can override consent.
Permits retention of DNA found at a crime scene in perpetuity , even if conviction of offender has been overturned.	If the person has been found innocent his DNA profile has to be removed immediately.
DNA profiles for civil matters will also be stored in the data banks, but without a clear and separate index.	Violates the fundamental right to privacy and does not serve any public purpose.
DNA profiles will be placed with National DNA Data bank and its regional centres	In absence of robust data protection legislation , security of a huge number of DNA profiles is questionable.

RELAXATION IN ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND PAYMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT UNDER ABVKY

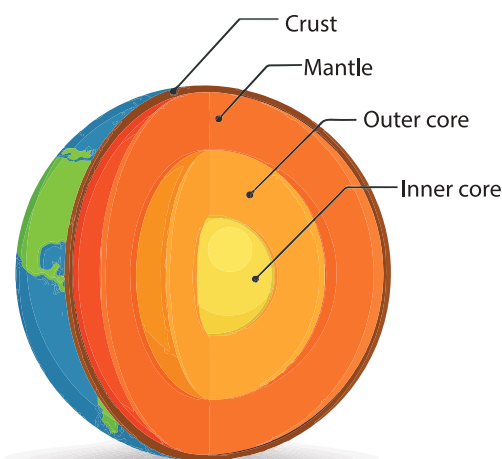
- Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) is **implemented by Employee's State Insurance Corporation** under which unemployment benefit is paid to workers covered under Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Scheme.
 - > ESI Scheme **aims to protect 'employees'** against impact of incidences of sickness, maternity, disablement and death due to employment injury and to provide medical care to insured persons and their families.
 - Minimum **two year of insurable employment** is required to claim relief.
- Relaxations are made to cope with job loss during COVID-19 pandemic.
 - > **Payment of relief enhanced to 50%** (earlier 25%) of average wages payable up to maximum 90 days of unemployment.
 - > **Claims can be filed directly by workers**, earlier they needed to get it forwarded by last employers.
 - > **Relief becoming payable after 30 days of unemployment** (earlier 90 days).
 - > **Benefit will be settled within 15 days** from date of an application.
 - > Enhanced relief will be payable **during 24th March, 2020 to 31st December, 2020.**
 - > **Scheme was extended up to 30th June 2021.**
 - Scheme was introduced in July 2018 for two years initially.

EARTH'S INNER CORE IS OLDER THAN PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED, FIND RESEARCHERS

- Researchers **have revised the estimate of the age of Earth's solid inner core to 1-1.3 billion years old.**
 - > Earlier it was reported that inner core was only about 565 million years old, quite young compared to the age of Earth (4.5-billion-year).
- **Earth's core is made mostly of iron**, with the inner core being solid and the outer core being liquid.
 - > The **circulation of this liquid metal creates electric currents** and turns Earth into a giant electromagnet. This is how Earth's magnetic field is generated. The process is called **geodynamo.**
- **Earlier estimates have created a paradox**, where the core would have had to reach unrealistically high temperatures to maintain the geodynamo for billions of years before the formation of the inner core.
 - > It suggests that geodynamo was maintained by two different energy sources and mechanisms.

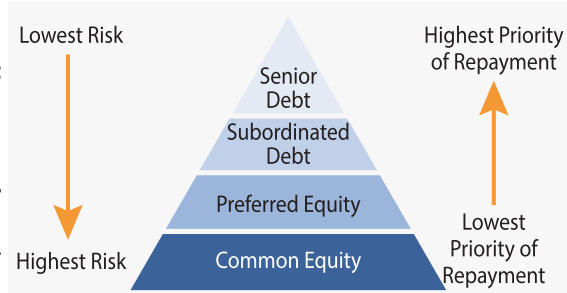
"NO-GENETICALLY-MODIFIED (NO-GM)" CERTIFICATE MANDATORY FOR IMPORTED FOOD CROPS FROM JANUARY 1, 2021

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) order says importers of 24 major food crops will have to **mandatorily declare that products are not GM** and that they also have a non-GM origin.
 - > It includes apple, eggplant, maize, wheat, pineapple, plum, potato, rice, soyabean, sugarcane, tomato etc.
 - > GM crops are **cultivated from seeds that are genetically engineered to increase yields or tolerance to pests.**
- **Reason:** Environmental groups have been complaining that **imported foods often contain GM organisms** which is concern for
 - > **Human health like allergic reaction**, antibiotic resistance, gene transfer etc.
 - > **Environment like introduction of engineered genes** into wild populations, susceptibility of non-target organisms to gene product, loss of biodiversity etc.
- **GM food imports require approvals under two laws:** Environment Protection Act, 1986 (covers environmental impacts) and Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (assesses impact on human health).
 - > **Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee** (under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) is the apex body that **allows for commercial release of GM crops.**
 - > **After GEAC approval, FSSAI will do the risk assessment** before clearing it for consumption.



GUIDELINES FOR CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR SUBORDINATE DEBT (CGSSD) FOR STRESSED MSMEs ISSUED

- CGSSD was announced under Atmanirbhar Bharat package **to provide subordinate debt to MSMEs** that have stressed accounts or that are already non-performing asset (NPAs).
- Subordinate debt is a type of debt** that an individual or a company can take on and which has a lower priority of repayment.
 - In the event of liquidation or bankruptcy, the borrower would first pay off other **senior debt** and only then get to subordinate debt.
 - Thus, **Subordinate debt is riskier than senior debt** because there is a much higher chance of it not being repaid.
- Under the scheme, Scheduled Commercial Banks will provide **personal loans to promoters of stressed MSMEs** amounting to 15% of their stake (equity plus debt) or Rs 75 lakh, whichever is lower.
- It is being operated by Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).
 - CGTMSE will guarantee 90% of the subordinate debt** given by the banks, with the remaining 10% being covered through a collateral put up by the borrower.



ALSO IN NEWS

<p>India, Uzbekistan hold first meeting of the National Coordination Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is for monitoring implementation of mutually agreed projects between two countries. In 2019, India Uzbekistan conducted first-ever military exercise DUSTLIK-2019. Uzbekistan is among the world leaders in the supply of certain types of minerals: gold, uranium, copper, phosphate.
<p>ASTROSAT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, a Global team of scientists discovered one of the earliest galaxies using India's ASTROSAT. ASTROSAT is India's first dedicated multi wavelength space observatory. The mission endeavours for a more detailed understanding of our universe. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It observes universe in optical, Ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum. It was launched in a 650-km, near-equatorial orbit. One of the unique features of ASTROSAT mission is that it enables the simultaneous multi-wavelength observations of various astronomical objects with a single satellite.
<p>Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspire faculty fellow from National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu) is exploring low-cost biodiesel from microalgae. INSPIRE is sponsored and managed by Department of Science & Technology for attraction of talent to Science. Basic objective of INSPIRE is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate to youth of the country the excitements of creative pursuit of science. Build the required critical human resource pool for strengthening and expanding the Science & Technology system and R&D base.
<p>Fujiwhara effect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two tropical storms, Marco and Laura, are likely to impact the Gulf of Mexico, sparking concerns of the Fujiwhara effect. When two hurricanes (a tropical cyclone of the Atlantic Ocean) collide, the phenomenon is called the Fujiwhara effect. If two cyclones pass within 900 miles of each other, they can they can start to orbit. What happens next depends on size of each storm. Often, the effect is additive, and usually end up with one massive storm instead of two smaller ones.
<p>Super apps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tata Group is planning to launch an all-in-one super app by the end of this year. Super app is a platform developed by a company offering various services under one umbrella. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.g. China's WeChat started out as a messaging app, expanded into payments, cabs, shopping, food ordering, etc. A country or a region becomes super app-ready when its large base of population has smartphone first instead of desktop and ecosystem of apps customised to local needs is not evolved. Concerns: possibility of a monopoly, concerns of privacy etc.
<p>Bonda Tribe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, Four members of the Bonda Tribal community have tested positive for COVID-19. Bondas, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG), live in settlements comprising small hutments in the hills hill ranges of Malkangiri district in Odisha. Bondas follows a matriarchal society. They still continue to speak in their language, Remo. As per Census 2011 there are around 12,000 Bondas left.
<p>Namath Basai</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is Kerala government's unique programme of teaching tribal children in their mother tongue. The programme has succeeded in retaining hundreds of tribal children in their online classes by making them feel at home with the language of instruction.

8468022022, 9019066066

www.visionias.in



DELHI



LUCKNOW



JAIPUR



HYDERABAD



PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH