Polity & Governance · GS - II

“Section 52A of the NDPS Act serves both as an evidentiary safeguard and a protection against procedural misuse.” Discuss its significance in ensuring fair trials in narcotics cases.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 15/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

NDPS Act, Section 52A, Magistrate certification, chain of custody, evidentiary integrity, accused persons’ rights, substantial compliance, fair trial, prosecution burden.

Model Answer

Introduction:

Section 52A of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 provides a procedure for inventory preparation, photography and sampling of seized narcotic substances, with Magistrate-related certification safeguards.

Significance:

1. **Evidence integrity:** Helps establish that the substance examined by the forensic laboratory corresponds to the material seized.
2. **Fair trial:** Reduces the risk of substitution, tampering and disputes over the identity of seized contraband.
3. **Judicial oversight:** Magistrate certification strengthens the reliability of inventories, photographs and samples used as primary evidence.

Legal position:

The Supreme Court has clarified that substantial compliance with Section 52A is important. A procedural lapse does not automatically invalidate the prosecution; courts must assess whether it creates doubt about the evidence and the prosecution’s case.

Conclusion:

Effective compliance with Section 52A strengthens both the enforcement of narcotics laws and the constitutional principle of a fair trial.

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