



C.A Dated On 31-07-2019

GS-1

Water stress: India

Context

The recent acute water shortage in Chennai has fuelled concerns that a potential water crisis is awaiting India's large cities, which are grappling with the pressures of rapid population growth, depletion of water resources and adverse effects of climate change.

What does report says?

- The sub-national Water Stress Index, formulated by London-based risk analytics firm Verisk Maplecroft, lists India as the 46th highest risk country in the world.
- What's more worrying is that 11 of India's 20 largest cities face an 'extreme risk' of water stress and seven are in the 'high risk' category.
- According to the index, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Nashik, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Indore are among the cities facing 'extreme risk'.
- The index measures the water consumption rates of households, industries and farm sectors and the available resources in rivers, lakes and streams.
- The index suggests that Bengaluru and Surat are experiencing the greatest surge in demand for water and are most at risk of facing scarcity.
- Chennai and Delhi are extremely vulnerable too, the paper notes. Moreover, increasing demand for water could lead to an economic crisis.
- The United Nations estimates that Delhi's population will grow from 28 million people to above 43 million by 2035, a 52% rise, while Chennai will grow by 47% to top 15 million over the same period.

Climate change vulnerability index

- India is rated 'high risk' in the Climate Change Vulnerability Index, which suggests that effects of climate change like an 'extended dry season' would make matters worse for the country's cities.
- The study says, "Many major Indian cities are projected to experience a higher number of consecutive drought days when precipitation is less than 1 mm.
- Bengaluru, for example, is expected to experience 5% increase in consecutive drought days by 2060, relative to the period from 1981 to 2005."

Migration in India



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A report

In India, most men migrate for work while most women migrate after marriage. However, some States, especially those in the northeast, don't follow this trend.

Salient observation points

A. Migration for work among male migrants and relocation after marriage among female migrants are relatively low in most of the northeastern States.

B. After the Northeast, the States in the western and southern regions witnessed relatively lower migration rates of men for work. The States in the south also recorded low migration rates of women post marriage.

C. The eastern States recorded some of the highest male migration rates for work.

D. In every State, less than 1% of female migrants moved for education. On the contrary, in all the States >1% men migrants moved for education. Relocation for education was more pronounced in the northeastern States.

Close to 10% male migrants in Meghalaya moved out due to marriage while Manipur saw the highest female migration rates for work.

GS-2

Consumer Protection Bill, 2019

Why in news?

The Lok Sabha today passed the Consumer Protection Bill 2019 after due consideration and discussion.



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Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Shri Ram Vilas Paswan said that the bill aims at protecting the interests of consumers by establishing authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of consumers' dispute.

Salient Features of the Bill

1. **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)**: Executive Agency to provide relief to a class of consumers. The CCPA will be empowered to-

2. **Simplified Dispute Resolution process**

i) Pecuniary Jurisdiction enhanced to-

District Commission –Up to Rs1 crore

State Commission- Between Rs1 crore and Rs 10 crore

National Commission –Above Rs.10 crore

ii) Deemed admissibility after 21days of filing

iii) Empowerment of Consumer Commission to enforce their orders

iv) Appeals only on question of law after second stage

v) Ease of approaching consumer commission



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3. **Mediation**

- An Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism
- Reference to Mediation by Consumer Forum wherever scope for early settlement exists and parties agree for it.
- Mediation cells to be attached to Consumer Forum
- No appeal against settlement through mediation

4. **Product Liability**

- A manufacturer or product service provider or product seller to be responsible to compensate for injury or damage caused by defective product or deficiency in services
- Presently Consumer only have a single point of access to justice, which is time consuming. Additional swift executive remedies are proposed in the bill through Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

5. **Deterrent punishment to check misleading advertisements and adulteration of products**

Unlawful Activities Prevention Amendment (UAPA) Bill

Why in news?



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The Unlawful Activities Prevention Amendment (UAPA) Bill is an anti-terror legislation that seeks to designate an individual as a “terrorist”.

Who is a “terrorist” in the Bill?

- The words “terror” or “terrorist” are not defined, but the UAPA Bill in Section 15 defines a “terrorist act” as any act committed with intent to threaten or likely to threaten the unity, integrity, security, economic security, or sovereignty of India or with intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India or in any foreign country.
- The original Act dealt with “unlawful” acts related to secession; anti-terror provisions were introduced in 2004.
- The Bill seeks to empower the central government to designate an individual a “terrorist” if they are found committing, preparing for, promoting, or involved in an act of terror.
- A similar provision already exists in Part 4 and 6 of the legislation for organisations that can be designated as a “terrorist organisation”.

How are individuals declared terrorists?

- The central government may designate an individual as a terrorist through a notification in the official gazette, and add his name to the schedule supplemented to the UAPA Bill.
- The government is not required to give an individual an opportunity to be heard before such a designation.
- At present, in line with the legal presumption of an individual being innocent until proven guilty, an individual who is convicted in a terror case is legally referred to as a terrorist, while those suspected of being involved in terrorist activities are referred to as terror accused.
- The Bill does not clarify the standard of proof required to establish that an individual is involved or is likely to be involved in terrorist activities.

What happens when an individual is declared a terrorist?

- The designation of an individual as a global terrorist by the United Nations is associated with sanctions including travel bans, freezing of assets and an embargo against procuring arms.
- The UAPA Bill, however, does not provide any such detail.



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- The Bill also does not require the filing of cases or arresting individuals while designating them as terrorists. According to Home Ministry officials, the consequences will be prescribed in the Rules supplemented to the law once the amendment Bill is passed.
- The Bill also seeks to give the central government the power to remove a name from the schedule when an individual makes an application. The procedure for such an application and the process of decision-making will also be decided by the central government.
- If an application filed by an individual declared a terrorist is rejected by the government, the Bill gives him the right to seek a review within one month after the application is rejected.
- Under the amendment Bill, the central government will set up the review committee consisting of a chairperson (a retired or sitting judge of a High Court) and three other members. The review committee will be empowered to order the government to delete the name of the individual from the schedule that lists “terrorists”, if it considers the order to be flawed.
- Apart from these two avenues, the individual can also move the courts challenging the government’s order.

What are the other major changes proposed in the UAPA Bill?

- The existing UAPA law requires an investigating officer to take prior permission of the Director General of Police of a state for conducting raids, and seizing properties that are suspected to be linked to terrorist activities.
- The amendment Bill, however, removes this requirement if the investigation is conducted by an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).
- The investigating officer, under the Bill, only requires sanction from the Director General of NIA.
- Central agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are required to obtain prior permission from the state government since law and order is a state subject under the Constitution.
- The existing UAPA law specifies that only officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police of the NIA shall have the power to investigate offences under the UAPA law.
- The Bill seeks to allow NIA officers of Inspector rank to carry out investigations.

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TOI 270

Why in news?



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It is the name of the dwarf star and the planetary system recently discovered by NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS).

About the star:

TOI 270 is about 73 light years away from Earth, and is located in the constellation Pictor.

Its members include the dwarf star, which is 40 per cent smaller than the Sun in size and mass, and the three planets or exoplanets (planets outside the solar system) that have been named TOI 270 b, TOI 270 c, and TOI 270 d.

These three planets orbit the star every 3.4 days, 5.7 days, and 11.4 days respectively.

What is TOI270b

- In this system, TOI 270 b is the innermost planet.
- Researchers expect it to be a rocky world about 25 per cent bigger than Earth. It is not habitable since it is located too close to the star — about 13 times closer than our Solar System's Mercury is from the Sun.
- On the other hand, TOI 270 c and TOI 270 d are Neptune-like planets because their compositions are dominated by gases rather than rock.
- Planet d, which is suspected to have a rocky core covered by a thick atmosphere, offers a surface unfavourably warm for the existence of liquid water, thereby rendering the planet potentially uninhabitable.
- With further study and observations, researchers expect to find the composition of these planets, the presence of atmosphere in them and the kinds of gases they contain, etc.

Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019

Why in news?

On July 29, the Rajya Sabha passed the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 19 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and aims to protect investors from fraudulent investment schemes, such as Ponzi schemes. The Bill covers previously existing gaps in legislation that had been exploited by various parties to siphon large amounts of money away from small investors.

Objectives



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- In essence, all deposit schemes, with or without interest, except those regulated by the government, have been banned by the bill.
- Such schemes can result in great losses of capital when those who hold the deposit default on its repayment, as in the case of Pune's D S Kulkarni Developers, who defaulted on the repayment of their deposits worth over Rs 1,000 crore after promising depositors high returns on their deposits.

How does Bill define deposits and deposit-takers?

- According to an analysis of the Bill by PRS India, deposits are defined as “an amount of money received through an advance, a loan, or in any other form, with a promise to be returned with or without interest”.
- The Bill excludes, among others, payments received in the form of a loan from relatives, and contributions towards capital made by partners in a partnership firm from this definition of deposits.
- The Bill defines a deposit-taker as the individual, group of individuals, or a company that is soliciting or receiving deposits.
- The provisions of the Bill make it so that in the event of prosecution, it is the deposit-taker who is liable to be prosecuted, and not those who made the deposits.

What are unregulated deposit schemes? What are Ponzi schemes?

- Under the Bill, deposit-taking schemes are defined as unregulated if they are undertaken for business purposes, and additionally, are not registered with one of the nine regulatory authorities, whom the Bill has made responsible for overseeing such deposit-taking schemes.
- A common type of scam involving unregulated deposits is the Ponzi scheme, a type of investment fraud wherein one party promises high returns on an investment with little to no risk.
- The early investors in a Ponzi scheme are repaid by the scheme acquiring new investors, and so on.
- Once there are no longer enough people to secure a new round of investments, the scheme collapses and the investors lose their money.

Which are the regulators overseeing deposit-taking schemes?



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- There are nine authorities charged with the oversight and regulation of deposit-taking schemes, including the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), and state and union territory governments.
- Each authority oversees different types of deposit-taking schemes, with the RBI overseeing deposits taken by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), and Sebi overseeing mutual funds.
- Any deposit-taking scheme must be registered with the relevant authority, based on the category it falls under, and only then is its operation legal.

What is the mechanism by which the Bill aims to combat unregulated deposit schemes?

- Under the provisions of the Bill, a competent authority will be appointed, with a rank not below secretary to the state or central government.
- The Bill gives this authority the power to provisionally attach (a protective measure to seize property) the property of the deposit-taker and all the deposits received by them.
- The Bill also allows the competent authority to summon and examine people to obtain evidence, and order records to be produced.
- Furthermore, the Bill provides for the formation of designated courts in specific areas.
- The designated court will possess the ability to make the provisional attachment absolute once approached by the competent authority.
- The court will then direct the competent authority in how the deposits recovered in this manner will be equitably redistributed to the depositors.
- The entire process is to be completed within 180 days of the application from the competent authority to the court.
- The central government will additionally designate an authority to establish an online database with information on various deposit-takers.
- The database will be used to ascertain which deposit-takers are regulated, and which are not. Deposit-takers will be required to inform the authority in charge of the database about their actions and the state of their business.

What are the penalties for violating the provisions of the Bill?

- Three kinds of offences are delineated under this Bill: running unregulated deposit-taking schemes (which includes advertising, operating, and accepting money for such schemes),



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fraudulently defaulting on the deposits made under a regulated deposit-taking scheme, and prompting investors to invest in unregulated deposit schemes by knowingly falsifying facts.

- The first kind of offence has been made punishable by 2 to 7 years of imprisonment, and a fine of Rs 3 lakh to Rs 10 lakh.
- The second kind of offence is punishable by imprisonment for 3 to 10-year, and fines ranging from Rs 2 lakhs to double the amount collected from depositors.
- Repeat offenders may be punished by a 5 to 10-year stint in prison, and fines ranging from Rs 10 lakh to 5 crore.