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POLITY

SC asks Upper Yamuna River Board to resolve water crisis in Delhi

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) to consider and resolve the drinking water crisis in Delhi, saying it does not have the expertise to decide the “complex and sensitive issue” which involves sharing of Yamuna water among States which are signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) dating 20 years back.



Upper Yamuna River Board

Established through a 1994 MoU among Chief Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi, UYRB oversees the Yamuna stretch from its origin to the Okhla Barrage in Delhi. As a subordinate office under the Ministry of Jal Shakti's Department of Water Resources, UYRB plays a crucial role in water management and collaboration among the mentioned states.

Interstate River Disputes

Interstate River Water Disputes refer to disputes between two or more states regarding use, distribution and control of rivers flowing through them. In recent years, increasing water scarcity, a rapid rise in urban and rural demands for freshwater, and contentious political dynamics have further exacerbated the problem.

Article 262 of the Constitution provides for adjudication of Interstate River Water Disputes. Parliament has passed two laws, the River Boards Act (1956) and the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

- Under this, Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution

and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.

- Parliament may also provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint.

The Parliament has enacted the two laws:

1. The River Boards Act (1956).
2. The Inter-State Water Disputes Act (1956).

The River Boards Act:

It provides for the establishment of river boards by the Central government for the regulation and development of inter-state river and river valleys.

A River Board is established on the request of state governments concerned to advise them.

The Inter-State Water Disputes Act:

It empowers the Central government to set up an ad hoc tribunal for the adjudication of a dispute between two or more states in relation to the waters of an inter-state river or river valley.

- The decision of the tribunal is final and binding on the parties to the dispute.
- Neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to have jurisdiction in respect of any water dispute which may be referred to such a tribunal under this Act.



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—Benjamin Franklin

POLITY

Manipur forms panel to oversee relocation of IDPs

CONTEXT: The Manipur government on Thursday constituted a Cabinet sub-committee to oversee the rehabilitation and relocation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the State, days after a recent spate of violence in Jiribam district displaced around 1,000 more people from their homes. The ethnic conflict in the State has led to over 220 deaths so far. Over 50,000 people have been internally displaced since the conflict began.



Internal Displacement

Internal displacement describes the situation of people who have been forced to leave their homes but have not left their country.

Factors of Displacement: Millions of people are uprooted from their homes or places of habitual residence each year in the context of conflict, violence, development projects, disasters and climate change and remain displaced within their countries' borders.

Components: Internal displacement is based on two components:

- The person's movement is coerced or involuntary (to distinguish them from economic and other voluntary migrants);
- The person stays within internationally recognised state borders (to distinguish them from refugees).

Difference from Refugee: According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a "refugee" is a person who has been persecuted and forced to leave his native country.

A precondition of being considered a refugee is that a person crosses an international border.

Unlike refugees, internally displaced people are not the subject of any international convention.

At the international level, no single agency or organisation has been designated as the global lead on protection and assistance of internally displaced persons.

However, there are United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Challenges Faced by Internally Displacement Persons (IDPs): IDPs can live under threat of physical attack, sexual- or gender-based violence, and run the risk of being separated from family members.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Doval reappointed National Security Adviser, Mishra to stay PM's Principal Secretary

CONTEXT: The top officials in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) were reappointed on Thursday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office for a third straight term last week.

P.K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, was retained for a second term and National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval for a rare third term, while two advisers, Amit Khare and Tarun Kapoor, have been reappointed for a tenure of two years each.

After repeating most of his top ministerial team from his previous term, the Prime Minister has also signalled continuity in governance by repeating Mr. Mishra, an old hand who worked with him in Gujarat and since 2014 when Mr. Modi took over as the Prime Minister.

National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)

Background: The National Security Council (NSC) of India is an executive government agency established in 1998 and tasked with advising the Prime Minister's Office on matters of national security and strategic interest.

The NSC is the apex body of the 3-tiered structure of the national security management system in India. The 3-tiers are the Strategic Policy Group, the National Security Advisory Board and a secretariat from the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

The National Security Advisor (NSA) presides over the NSC. NSA is also the primary advisor to the prime minister.

About National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) –

NSCS is the apex agency looking into the political, economic, energy and strategic security concerns of India.

The NSCS has four verticals:

- Strategic Planning;
- Internal Affairs;
- Intelligence and Technology;
- Military

National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) works under NSCS and coordinates with different agencies at the national level for cyber security matters.

National Security Strategy

A National Security Strategy document outlines the country's security objectives, and the ways to be adopted to achieve these.

It defines traditional, non-traditional threats and opportunities while introducing accountability of agencies tasked with the implementation of such responsibilities.

In a nutshell, a national security strategy would guide the military as well as critical defence and security reforms with strategic implications.

It will provide a holistic view of the overall national security, the threats and the roadmap to address them.

CULTURE

All four gates of Jagannath temple in Puri reopened

CONTEXT: All four gates of the 12th-century Jagannath temple in Puri were reopened for devotees on Thursday morning in the presence of Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and his Council of Ministers. The previous BJD government had kept three of the four gates shut since the pandemic. Devotees had been facing inconvenience as entry was allowed through only one gate. Opening all the temple gates was a key promise in the BJP's election manifesto. Mr. Majhi said the Odisha government had also decided to set up a ₹500-crore corpus fund for better management, maintenance, and development of the temple.



About Jagannath Temple

- It is located in Puri, Odisha.
- It is one of the most famous and sacred Hindu temples in the world.
- It is dedicated to Lord Jagannath, a form of the Hindu deity Vishnu.
- It is believed to have been built during the reign of King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva, of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, in the 12th century.
- This temple is called 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death, has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- Architecture: The Jagannath Temple is a striking example of Kalinga architecture, a distinct style prevalent in the Odisha region.
- The temple's main structure, the sanctum sanctorum, or the garbhagriha, houses the idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra.
- Ratha Yatra is a Hindu festival associated with Lord Jagannath held at Puri in Odisha.
- The festival commemorates Jagannath's annual visit to Gundicha Temple via Mausai Maa Temple (aunt's home) near Balagandi Chaka, Puri.
- The most famous Rath Yatra festival begins on the second day of the bright half of the lunar month of Ashadha (June–July) and lasts for nine days.
- During this time, the deities are taken out of the Jagannath Puri Temple and placed on three massive chariots.

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ECONOMY

GST Council to meet for the first time this year on June 22

CONTEXT: The Centre has decided to convene a meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on June 22, eight-and-a-half months after its last meeting, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday. "The 53rd meeting of the GST Council will be held on 22nd June, 2024 at New Delhi," a ministry statement informed. The Council that is generally expected to meet every quarter, has met just six times since 2022.

The agenda for the up-coming meeting is not known yet but State Finance Ministers can be expected to flag suggestions for the indirect tax regime that can be incorporated in the Union Budget likely to be presented next month. Industry will also be keen for signals on the revival of a plan to restructure the complex multiple-rate tax structure, now that GST revenues have risen significantly, along with a promised review of the 28% levy on bets made in online gaming, casinos, and horse racing.

What is the GST Council?

Background: The Goods and Services Tax regime came into force after the Constitutional (122nd Amendment) Bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament in 2016.

More than 15 Indian states then ratified it in their state Assemblies, after which the President gave his assent.

About:

The GST Council is a joint forum of the Centre and the states. It was set up by the President as per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution.

Members:

The members of the Council include the Union Finance Minister (chairperson), the Union Minister of State (Finance) from the Centre. Each state can nominate a minister in-charge of finance or taxation or any other minister as a member.

Functions:

The Council, according to Article 279, is meant to "make recommendations to the Union and the states on important issues related to GST, like the goods and services that may be subjected or exempted from GST, model GST Laws".

It also decides on various rate slabs of GST.

For instance, an interim report by a panel of ministers has suggested imposing 28 % GST on casinos, online gaming and horse racing.



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ECONOMY

NBFCs eye overseas fund raise as RBI tightens fund flow

CONTEXT: In fact, some of the top-rated NBFCs have already starting tapping into the ECB market. Among them, Cholamandalam Investment & Finance raised the highest amount \$200 million followed by REC and Bajaj Finance fund raise of \$147.9 million and \$125 million in March quarter.

Difference between Banks & NBFCs??

Point of difference	NBFCs	Banks
Demand Deposits	Cannot accept.	Can accept.
Drawing a Cheque	Cannot issue or draw a cheque on its own.	Can issue cheque freely.
Deposit Insurance facility	Not available for NBFC depositors	Is available for bankers.
Act for regulation	They are covered under Indian Companies Act, 1956.	They are covered under The Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

About Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC):

- A NBFC is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956, engaged in the business of loans and advances, the acquisition of shares/stocks/bonds/debentures/securities issued by the Government or local authority or other marketable securities of a like nature, leasing, hire-purchase, insurance business, chit business.
- It does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture activity, industrial activity, the purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.
- A non-banking institution which is a company and has the principal business of receiving deposits under any scheme or arrangement in one lump sum or in instalments by way of contributions, or in any other manner, is also a NBFC (Residuary non-banking company)

NBFCs lend and make investments, and hence their activities are akin to that of banks; however, there are a few differences as given below:

- NBFCs do not have a banking license;
- NBFCs cannot accept demand deposits;
- NBFCs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself;
- Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs, unlike in the case of banks.
- Unlike banks, NBFCs are not subjected to stringent and substantial regulations.



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ECONOMY

DGFT wants interest equalisation scheme for exporters to continue post June 30

CONTEXT: In a move set to bring relief to exporters, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has concluded that there is merit in continuing the interest equalisation scheme for the export sector and is in discussions with the Finance Ministry on the terms of its extension beyond the month-end, sources have said.

The scheme, which allows exporters of 410 identified products and all MSME exporters to access bank credit at a subsidised interest rate determined by the government, is set to lapse on June 30.

First implemented in April 2015 for five years, the interest equalisation scheme provides a 2% interest subvention or subsidy on loans taken by exporters from 410 identified sectors and a 3% subvention to exporters from the MSME sector. While the subsidy is provided by the banks, they are later reimbursed by the government for their lower interest earnings.



Directorate General of Foreign Trade

- It is a government organization in India responsible for the formulation of exim guidelines and principles for Indian importers and Indian exporters of the country.
- Before 1991, DGFT was known as the Chief Controller of Imports & Exports (CCI&E).
- It is an attached office of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and is headed by the Director General of Foreign Trade.
- It has been assigned the role of "facilitator".
- It is responsible for implementing the Foreign Trade Policy or Exim Policy with the main objective of promoting Indian exports.
- The DGFT also issues scrips/authorization to exporters and monitors their corresponding obligations through a network of 24 regional offices.
- Functions
 - To implement the Exim Policy or Foreign Trade Policy of India by introducing various schemes and guidelines through its network of dgft regional offices throughout the country.
 - To Grant Exporter Importer Code Number to Indian Exporter and Importers. IEC Number is a unique 10 digit code required by the traders or manufacturers for the purpose of import and export in India.
 - It permits or regulate Transit of Goods from India or to countries adjacent to India in accordance with the bilateral treaties between India and other countries.
 - To promote trade with neighboring countries.
 - To grant the permission of free export in Export Policy Schedule 2.
 - Setting standard input-output norms is also controlled by the DGFT.
- Headquarter: New Delhi

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

South Africa's ANC strikes deal with several parties

CONTEXT: South Africa's long-standing ruling ANC said on Thursday it has reached an agreement with several other parties to form a coalition government, after failing to win an outright majority in general elections in May. Speaking on the eve of the first sitting of the newly elected Parliament, African National Congress Secretary General Fikile Mbalula said the government would "gravitate to the centre", after leftist parties shunned the deal.

The agreement means President Cyril Ramaphosa is likely to be appointed for a second term when law-makers convene in Cape Town on Friday.

Mr. Mbalula described the coalition as a national unity government and said it was to include the centre-right Democratic Alliance (DA), the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the small centre-left United Democratic Movement, and right-wing Afrikaner Freedom Front Plus (FF+)



About South Africa

- South Africa is the southernmost country in Africa, bordered by Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Eswatini, and Lesotho.
- Pretoria is the administrative capital, Cape Town is the legislative capital, Bloemfontein is the judicial capital, and the Constitutional Court is located in Johannesburg.
- The country is a multiethnic society with 12 official languages, the fourth-highest number in the world.
 - It is the only African nation to legislate same-sex marriage.
 - The country has the largest and most industrialised, technologically advanced economy in Africa.
 - South Africa has the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Africa.
 - The Great Escarpment, whose eastern stretch is known as the Drakensberg, is the highest peak in the country.
 - The interior of South Africa consists of a large, almost flat plateau with an altitude of between 1,000 m and 2,100 m. The plateau is surrounded by the Great Karoo, a sparsely populated shrubland, the Bushmanland, the Kalahari Desert, the Highveld, and the Limpopo River lowlands or Lowveld.
 - The Cape Peninsula forms the southernmost tip of the coastal strip which borders the Atlantic Ocean and terminates at the country's border with Namibia at the Orange River.
 - South Africa has a temperate climate due to its proximity to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, mild Southern Hemisphere, and rising elevation.



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