

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 06 Jul 2021

1. A.P.-Telangana dispute over Krishna water intensifies

(Topic- GS Paper II-Governance, Source- PIB)

Why in the news?

- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have recently intensified the dispute of sharing of the Krishna waters.
- The dispute is particularly in the wake of works on the **Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS)** taken up by Andhra Pradesh and power generation at three inter-State projects by Telangana.

Related Information

- The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 mandates for the constitution of an Apex Council by the Central Government for the supervision of the functioning of the Godavari River Management Board and Krishna River Management Board.
- The Apex Council comprises the Union Water Resources Minister and the Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

About Inter-State River Water Disputes

- **Article 262 of the Constitution provides for the adjudication of inter-state water disputes.**
- 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.
 - a. The River Boards Act (1956)**
 - b. The Inter-State Water Disputes Act (1956)**
- The River Boards Act 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.

Some Water Tribunal and their concerned states

- **Ravi & Beas Water Tribunal** - Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
- **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal**- Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra
- **Vansadhara Water Disputes Tribunal**- Andhra Pradesh & Odisha
- **Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal**- Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra

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- **Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal** - Odisha and Chhattisgarh

2. Section 66A of IT Act

(Topic- GS Paper II- Governance, Source- PIB)

Why in the news ?

- The Supreme Court found it “distressing”, “shocking” and “terrible” that people were still booked and tried under Section 66A of the Information Technology (IT) Act even six years after it struck down the provision as unconstitutional and a violation of free speech.

About the Section 66A of the Information Technology (IT) Act

- Section 66A dealt with information related crimes in which sending information, by means of a computer resource or a communication device, which is inter alia offensive, derogatory and menacing is made a punishable offence.
- It had been dubbed as “draconian” for it allowed the arrest of several innocent persons, igniting a public outcry for its scraping.

Punishment

- It prescribed the punishment for sending messages through computer or any other communication device like a mobile phone or a tablet, and a conviction could fetch a maximum of three years in jail.

Shreya Singhal v/s Union of India

- In this case, the Supreme Court has struck down the Section 66A of the Information Technology (IT) Act for “being violative of Article 19(1) (a) and not saved under Article 19(2).”
- The court, in the Shreya Singhal Judgment authored by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman in March 2015, had concluded that the provision of the **Section 66A of the Information Technology (IT) Act** is vague and worded arbitrarily.
- **Article 19(1) (a) gives peoples the right to speech and expression whereas 19(2) accord the state the power to impose “reasonable restrictions” on exercise of this right.**

3. Section 43D (5) of UAPA

(Topic- GS Paper II- Governance, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Stan Swamy had moved the Bombay High Court challenging Section 43D (5) of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) — a provision Swamy termed “illusory”.

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More on the news

- The provision makes grant of bail virtually impossible under UAPA since it leaves little room of judicial reasoning.
- In the case of **Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali**, the Supreme Court in 2019 confirmed that courts must accept the state's case without examining its merits while granting bail.
- In string of rulings, however, courts have taken an alternative reading of this provision, emphasising the right to a speedy trial and raising the bar for the state to book an individual under UAPA.

About Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

- It was first promulgated in 1967.
- It aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.
- It is considered to be the predecessor of laws such as the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) and Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).
- It is primarily an anti-terror law which is aimed at “more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations and for dealing with terrorist activities”.
- **The UAPA cases are tried by special courts.**
- Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged. It will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if crime is committed on a foreign land, outside India.
- Under the UAPA, the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 days after the arrests and the duration can be extended further after intimating the court.

Recent Amendment in UAPA

- Parliament cleared the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.
- The Act empowers the Director General of National Investigation Agency to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
- The Act empowers the officers of the National Investigation Agency, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in the state.

About Section 43D (5)

- Under Section 43D(5) of the act, there is a legal bar on granting bail if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the accusation against those held is prima facie true.
- They also didn't get bail as the provision of law are titled against accused
- The accused have to demonstrate to the court that the accusation is untrue.

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- A 2019 Supreme Court judgment bars a detailed analysis of the evidence at the bail stage and rules that bail can be denied on “the broad probabilities” of the case. These further added the burden on jailed student activists.

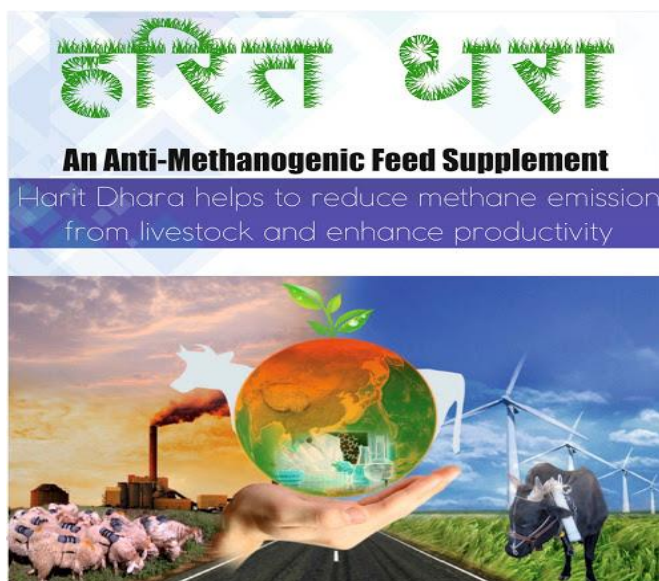
4. Anti-methanogenic feed supplement ‘Harit Dhara’

(Topic- GS Paper III- Environment, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institute has recently developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement ‘Harit Dhara’.

About Harit Dhara



- It is an anti-methanogenic feed supplement.
- Harit Dhara acts by decreasing the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea for reduction of CO₂ to methane.
- When it given to bovines and sheep, it not only cuts down their methane emissions by 17-20%, but also results in higher milk production and body weight gain.

Bovine contribution in global methane emission

- Belching cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats in India emit an estimated 9.25 million tonnes (mt) to 14.2 mt of methane annually, out of a global total of 90 mt-plus from livestock.
- The methane’s global warming potential – 25 times of carbon dioxide (CO₂) over 100 years, making it a more potent greenhouse gas – that’s cause for concern.

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- An average lactating cow or buffalo in India emits around 200 litres of methane per day, while it is 85-95 litres for young growing heifers and 20-25 litres for adult sheep.

Feeding Harit Dhara can reduce these by a fifth.

- For a cow producing 200 litres (143 g) of methane, it translates into 0.714 kg less of CO₂ equivalent emissions daily or 261 kg per year (1 litre methane=0.714 g; 1 kg methane=25 kg CO₂).

Related Information

Global Methane Assessment Report

- According to the Global Methane Assessment released by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) shows that human-caused methane emissions can be reduced by up to **45 per cent this decade**.
- Such reductions would avoid nearly 0.3°C of global warming by 2045 and would be consistent with keeping the Paris Climate Agreement's goal to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (1.5°C) within reach.

Government Initiatives

Seaweed-Based Animal Feed

- Central Salt & Marine Chemical Research Institute (CSMCRI) in collaboration with the country's three leading institutes developed a seaweed-based animal feed additive formulation that aims to reduce methane emissions from cattle and also boost immunity of cattle and poultry.

India Greenhouse Gas Program

- The India GHG Program led by WRI India (non-profit organization), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is an industry-led voluntary framework to measure and manage greenhouse gas emissions.
- The programme builds comprehensive measurement and management strategies to reduce emissions and drive more profitable, competitive and sustainable businesses and organisations in India.

National Action Plan on Climate Change

- The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was launched in 2008 which aims at creating awareness among the representatives of the public, different agencies of the government, scientists, industry and the communities on the threat posed by climate change and the steps to counter it.

5. RBI's Financial Stability Report- 2021

(Topic- GS Paper III- Economics, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India released its latest Financial Stability Report (or FSR).

About Financial Stability Report

- It is one of the most crucial documents on the Indian economy as it presents an assessment of the health of the financial system.
- It is published twice a year.
- It puts together a wealth of data and information that also allows the RBI to assess the state of the domestic economy.
- It allows the RBI to assess the macro-financial risks in the economy.
- It reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system in the context of contemporaneous issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector.

It focuses on public and private banks with the following aspects

- Capital availability for working
- Cost of NPAs and whether they are manageable
- Credit flow in different sectors of the economy
- Credit flow at personal levels (households)
- Macro-financial risks in the economy

Key Highlights:

Credit/deposit ratio

- The FSR noted that India faces a unique situation where CASA deposits were growing strongly but loan growth remained tepid. This led to a weakening of the credit/deposit ratio.

Capital Adequacy Ratio

- The capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) increased to 16.03 per cent and the provisioning coverage ratio (PCR) stood at 68.86 per cent in March 2021.

Gross Non Performing Asset

- Macro stress tests indicate that the gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of SCBs may increase from 7.48 per cent in March 2021 to 9.80 per cent by March 2022 under the

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baseline scenario; and to 11.22 per cent under a severe stress scenario, although SCBs have sufficient capital, both at the aggregate and individual level, even under stress.

Credit Demand

- The banks respond to credit demand in a recovering economy, they will need to reinforce their capital and liquidity positions to fortify themselves against potential balance sheet stress.

Nurturing the global recovery

- Sustained policy support, benign financial conditions and the gathering momentum of vaccination are nurturing an uneven global recovery.

6. Panchmuli lake

(Topic- GS Paper III- Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, as many as 194 crocodiles have been relocated from **Panchmuli Lake**, a lake near the Statue of Unity in Narmada district, Gujarat, in the last two years for the safety of tourists who come to enjoy boat rides there.

About the Panchmuli lake

- The Panchmuli Lake, also known as ‘Dyke-3’ of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, was developed for tourists visiting the Statue of Unity.
- It is situated near the 182-metre tall statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Kevadia.

About Sardar Sarovar Dam

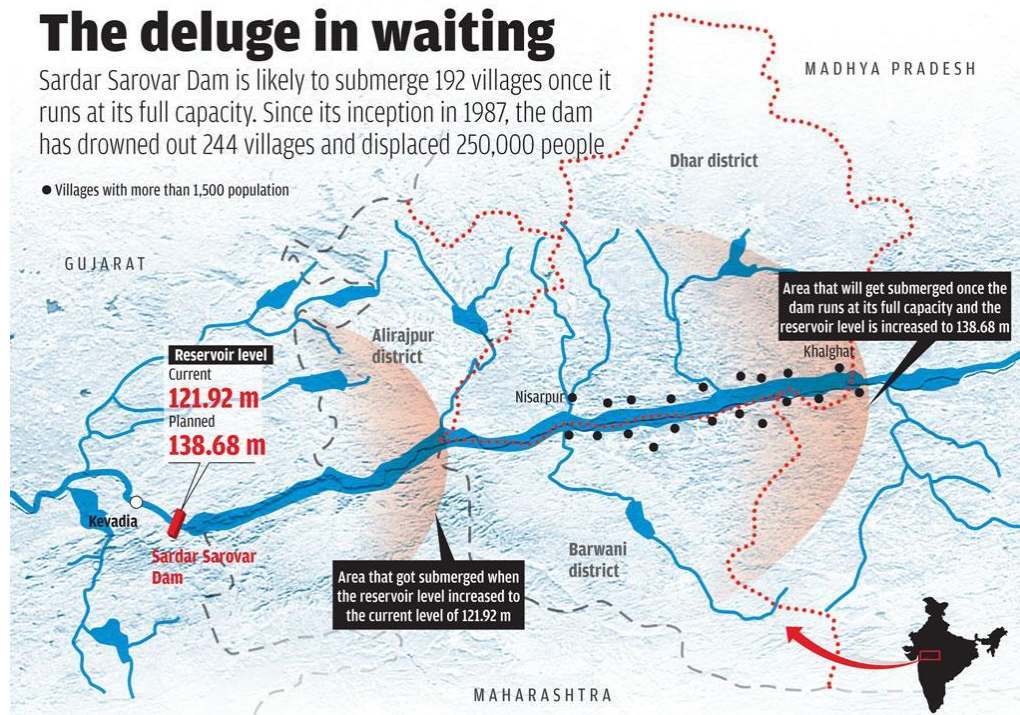
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The deluge in waiting

Sardar Sarovar Dam is likely to submerge 192 villages once it runs at its full capacity. Since its inception in 1987, the dam has drowned out 244 villages and displaced 250,000 people



- It is a gravity dam.
- The terminal dam is built on the Narmada River at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district.
- It is called the 'lifeline of Gujarat' and part of the Narmada Valley Development Project, a major plan to generate power and supply water for drinking and irrigation.

7. Fly ash

(Topic- GS Paper III- Science and Technology, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, the NTPC Ltd has invited Expressions of Interest (EoI) for the sale of fly ash from the designated ports of the Middle East and other regions.

About the Fly ash

- It is popularly known as Flue ash or pulverised fuel ash, it is a coal combustion product.
- Fly Ash is a by-product of power generation with coal.

Uses

- The fly ash generated at NTPC stations is ideal for use in the manufacture of cement, concrete, concrete products, cellular concrete products and for bricks, blocks and tiles.
- To promote the use of fly ash bricks in building construction.

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Waterproofing material

- Researchers from the IIT Hyderabad have found that fly ash a waste byproduct of power plants that poses a threat to the environment — can be modified into a waterproofing material.
- They have converted fly ash into a waterproofing material by treating it with stearic acid, which is commonly used in soaps and shampoos.

Initiatives Taken for Fly ash utilization

ASH TRACK Mobile App

- It is an initiative by NTPC Ltd.
- It is leveraging Indian Railways' sprawling network to transport Fly Ash in an economical and environment-friendly manner.

Fly Ash Brick Manufacturing Plants

- To promote the use of Fly Ash bricks in building construction.
- The company aims to utilise 100 per cent of the fly ash generated as a by-product at its coal-fired power plants.
- Further, during 2020-21, almost 15 NTPC station supplies fly ash to various road projects and ash utilization crossed nearly 20 million tonnes.

8. Global investors flag some AatmaNirbhar reforms

(Topic- GS Paper III- Economics, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- According to the U.K. India Business Council (UKIBC), International trade and investment flows into India could be affected by several aspects of the AatmaNirbhar Bharat programme as they posed 'perceived as well as real' challenges for global investors.

More on the news

- The U.K. India Business Council (UKIBC) stressed that some of the reforms announced under the programme could have 'negative consequences for U.K. and all multinational companies', even as it took note of Prime Minister's assertion that the self-reliant India program is about integrating with global supply chains, not isolating from them.

Increases in import tariffs

- UKBIC has said that 'unexpected and sharp' increases in import tariffs could be 'counterproductive'.

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‘Strengths, not tariffs’

- India should attract investors due to its strengths rather than by using tariffs as a tool to push international businesses to invest and make in India.
- Moreover, the Government of India should be flexible in its ‘vocal for local’ approach.
- To be a manufacturing hub, India will need to be part of international supply chains, which will mean importing as well as exporting.
- If tariffs make manufacturing in India too expensive, investors will go elsewhere. Even if India chooses tariffs as a policy tool, it should signal how import duties will rise over the coming years so investors get an incentive and the time to create domestic supply chains.

Effects on infrastructure investors

- Attempts to renegotiate power purchase agreements and ad-hoc policy shifts are also unnerving for infrastructure investors.

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