

12 MARCH 2019

WHO strategy to fight flu pandemics

Why in news?

- The World Health Organization has released a Global Influenza Strategy for 2019-2030.

In Brief:

- It aims at protecting people across the world from influenza. Influenza or flu is a contagious disease caused by influenza viruses.
- According to WHO, influenza is one of the world's greatest public health challenges.
- The objectives of the strategy are a) prevent seasonal influenza, b) control the spread of influenza from animals to humans and, c) Prepare for the next influenza pandemic. A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges and spreads around the world, and most people do not have immunity
- The WHO strategy has recommended countries to formulate a special influenza programme. This would help in disease surveillance, prevention, control, and preparedness for influenza.
- It has also recommended the development of more effective and more accessible vaccines and antiviral treatments. NGT issues notices on plea to halt road through Corbett

World Health Organisation (WHO)

- WHO IS A SPECIALISED AGENCY OF UN, ESTABLISHED IN 1948
- IT IS CONCERNED WITH INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH & IT ACTS AS COORDINATING AUTHORITY ON INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH
- HQ : GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
- INDIA IS A FOUNDER MEMBER OF WHO.
- MEMBERS THE WHO HAS 193 MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING 192 MEMBERS OF THE UN (ALL EXCEPT LIECHTENSTEIN), THE COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE.

NGT issues notices on plea to halt road through Corbett

Why in news?

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has halted the construction of Kandi Road Project in Uttarakhand. The Kandi Road Project seeks to connect Ramnagar in Kumaon to Kotdwar in Garhwal.

In brief:

- The construction of the road has been stopped as it passes through the core area of The Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- The NGT order comes in the backdrop of a plea which alleged that the construction of the link road would damage the ecosystem and biodiversity of the tiger reserve.
- The plea has stated that the construction of the road was in violation of previous Supreme Court orders. Supreme Court had prohibited the construction



Note



of any road through the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

- In 2005, the SC had approved a plan of a road connecting the Garhwal and Kumaon regions which did not include road passing through Jim Corbett.

National Green Tribunal:

- The NGT was established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010, passed by the Central Government.
- The stated objective of the Central Government was to provide a specialized forum for effective and speedy disposal of cases pertaining to environment protection, conservation of forests and for seeking compensation for damages caused to people or property due to violation of environmental laws or conditions specified while granting permissions.

Structure:

- The Chairperson of the NGT is a retired Judge of the Supreme Court, Head Quarters in Delhi. Other Judicial members are retired Judges of High Courts.
- Each bench of the NGT will comprise of at least one Judicial Member and one Expert Member.
- Expert members should have a professional qualification and a minimum of 15 years' experience in the field of environment/forest conservation and related subjects.

Legal jurisdiction of NGT:

- The NGT has the power to hear all civil cases relating to environmental issues and questions that are linked to the implementation of laws listed in Schedule I of the NGT Act. These include the following:
 1. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974;
 2. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977;
 3. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;
 4. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981;
 5. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; (aka EPA)
 6. The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991; (good option to confuse)
 7. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- **NOTE:** The NGT has not been vested with powers to hear any matter relating to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and various laws enacted by States relating to forests, tree preservation etc. Therefore, specific and substantial issues related to these laws cannot be raised before the NGT.

Principles of Justice adopted by NGT:

- The NGT is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- NGT is also not bound by the rules of evidence as enshrined in the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. Thus, it will be relatively easier for conservation groups to present facts and issues before the NGT, including pointing out technical flaws in a project, or proposing alternatives that could minimize environmental damage but which have not been considered.
- While passing Orders/decisions/awards, the NGT will apply the principles of sustainable development, the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principles.
- Review and Appeal: Orders can be appealed to the Supreme Court within 90 days.
- SC Decision: NGT has power to enforce its decisions:

Note



Jim Corbett National Park the Paradise of Tigers

- Jim Corbett National Park can be befittingly called the paradise of Tigers for the fact that it holds a large population of tigers in its breath taking landscapes that consists of different varieties of flora and fauna.
- The park is named after the legendary tiger hunter turned naturalist Jim Corbett (British hunter-1875-1955). It is the first national park of India.

Uncertain govt. policies clouded developer sentiment, hit solar capacity addition: Crisil report

Why in News?

- According to CRISIL report, India's target of adding 100 GW of solar project capacity by 2022 is facing problems due to
 - (a) Lack of clarity on policy
 - (b) Frequent bid cancellation and
 - (c) Safeguard measures.

In Brief:

- Last year, the Finance Ministry imposed up to 25% safeguard duty on imported solar panels and modules. The safeguard duty imposition has affected project costs by 10-15% and consequently led to a rise in bid tariffs.
- Safeguard Duty is tariff barrier imposed by government on the commodities to ensure that imports in excessive quantities do not harm the domestic industry.
- Further, clarification on the Goods and Services Tax (GST) procedures and its implementation for solar sector has been delayed for over a year. It has impacted commissioning schedules and project costs across developers.
- The Indian government has set a growth target of installation of 1750 GW aggregate capacity of renewable energy by 2022. Out of total 175 GW, target of 100 GW has been set for Solar Power.

BRITAIN: May's deal faces another crunch test today

Why in News?

- UK Parliamentarians will vote on Brexit deal after UK prime minister has said that she had secured "legally binding" changes to the backstop agreement with the European Union (EU). She said that this would mean that the European Union (EU) cannot keep the UK in the [Irish] backstop indefinitely.

In brief:

- The "backstop" agreement reached between the EU and the UK in 2017 stated that, in the absence of another solution for the Border, Northern Ireland would effectively remain within the EU customs union. This would ensure no hard border on the island of Ireland, where the UK and the rest of the European Union share their land border. But Political parties have opposed this arrangement as it would result in a border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.
- The United Kingdom comprises four geographic and historical parts—England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- **Brexit** is a term used to define United Kingdom coming out of EU. During a referendum in 2016, UK voted by a narrow margin in favour of Brexit. UK had

Note



invoked Article 50 in 2016 and the deadline for the Brexit deal is March 29, 2019. Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon gives any EU member state the right to quit unilaterally and outlines the procedure for doing so. It gives the leaving country two years to negotiate an exit deal.

Right to Vote: Assam CEO - people in electoral rolls can vote

Why in news?

- Assam chief electoral officer said those people who have their names enrolled in the electoral rolls will be able to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha polls.

In Brief:

- There was confusion among a large section of people in Assam whether those excluded from the draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) could cast their votes or not. The draft NRC published last year excluded over 40 lakh people from the citizenship register.
- The **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** is a register which contains the name of all citizens of India residing in Assam. It was prepared in 1951. The process of NRC update in Assam has been taken up as per a Supreme Court order in 2013. The update is being carried out under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and according to rules framed in the Assam Accord, 1985.
- Assam Accord** is a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between representatives of the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement- a movement against illegal immigrants in Assam. As per the accord, there has to be a separate NRC for Assam.
- Citizenship Act, 1955**- dealing with acquisition and loss of citizenship in India- was amended in 1985 to incorporate Section 6A. This section fixes March 25, 1971 as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to Bangladeshi migrants in Assam.

Parties may find it hard to raise Sabarimala issue in campaign

Why in news?

- Kerala's Chief Electoral Officer said that political parties invoking the Sabarimala temple during campaigning would be considered as the violation of Model code of conduct (MCC). MCC came into force after the Election Commission announced the dates for General election, 2019.
- The **Model Code of Conduct** is a set of general guidelines for model behaviour during elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies. This code, among other things, expects that political parties and candidates do not indulge in activities that could create tensions between different castes and communities.
- The Model Code of Conduct is only a set of guidelines with no statutory backing. In case of violation, the Commission usually resorts to censure. However, there have been examples in the past when the Election Commission has invoked sections of Indian Penal Code against violators for spreading enmity between communities and even banned people from campaigning.

Note

