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Daily News Analysis

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GENERAL STUDIES-3

Global Climate Risk Index 2019.

Why in News?

- The international environmental think tank 'Germanwatch' has recently released the Global Climate Risk Index 2019.
- The index analyses the extent to which countries and regions have been affected by the impacts of weather-related loss events (storms, floods, heat waves etc.).

Key Findings

- Worst affected in 2018: Japan, Philippines and Germany
- Worst affected between 1999-2018 (long-term index): Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti
- Deaths and financial loss between 1999-2018: Altogether, about 5 lakh people died as a direct result of more than 12 000 extreme weather events globally. Losses amounted to around US\$ 3.54 trillion (in purchasing power parities).
- Poor countries had to face much higher impacts: Of the ten most affected countries and territories in the period 1999-2018, seven were developing countries in the low income or lower-middle income country group, two were classified as upper-middle income countries (Thailand and Dominica) and one was an advanced economy generating high income (Puerto Rico).
- Link between climate change and the frequency & severity of extreme heat: Heatwaves were one major cause of damage in 2018.
- India, which suffered water shortages, crop failures and worst flooding, holds the 5th position. It has fallen from its 14th rank of countries hit most by climate change-induced weather phenomena in 2017.
- India has also recorded the highest number of fatalities due to climate change and the second-highest monetary losses from its impact in 2018.

World Soil Day (WSD)

- World soil day is held annually on 5 December to highlight the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.

The theme for WSD 2019 is 'Stop Soil Erosion, Save Our Future'.

Key points:

- It was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has supported the formal establishment of WSD as a global awareness-raising platform under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership.
- 5 December 2014 was designated as the first official World Soil Day by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- AO gives two awards in line with this day-



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The King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award- an annual award that honours individuals, communities, organizations and countries that organized remarkable and engaging World Soil Day activities or campaigns in the previous year.

- **The Glinka World Soil Prize**- an annual award for dynamic change-makers dedicated to solving one of our world's most pressing environmental issue: soil degradation. It honours individuals and organizations whose leadership and activities have contributed, or are still contributing to the promotion of sustainable soil management and the protection of soil

GENERAL STUDIES-2

Citizenship bill ready for tabling in the house

- The Bill amends the Citizenship bill, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship.
- Under the Act, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalisation is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, and for 11 of the previous 14 years.

The change:

- The Bill relaxes this 11-year requirement to six years for persons belonging to the same six religions and three countries.
- The Bill provides that the registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders may be cancelled if they violate any law.

Key Issues and Analysis

- The Bill makes illegal immigrants eligible for citizenship on the basis of religion. This may violate Article 14 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to equality.
- The Bill allows cancellation of OCI registration for violation of any law.
- This is a wide ground that may cover a range of violations, including minor offences (eg. parking in a no-parking zone).
- Under the 1955 Act, an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder's registration may be cancelled if he violates a law for which he is:
 - sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more, and
 - within five years of his OCI registration.
- The Bill adds another ground for cancelling OCI registration, which is a violation of any law of the country by an OCI.
- This means that even offences with:

(i) lesser penalties, or

(ii) which have been committed after five years of registration could be covered under the Bill.

Personal Data Protection Bill

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the Personal Data Protection Bill

Key points:

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- The Union cabinet on Wednesday gave its approval to the Personal Data Protection Bill that seeks to lay down a legal framework to preserve the sanctity of “consent” in data sharing and penalize those breaching privacy norms.
- In a first, the bill proposes social media platforms to create a mechanism so that for “every user who registers their service from India or uses their service from India, a voluntary verifiable account mechanism has to be made
- The bill categorizes data into three categories—critical, sensitive and general. Sensitive data—financial, health, sexual orientation, biometrics, transgender status, religious or political beliefs and affiliation—can be stored only in India. However, data can be processed outside India with explicit consent.
- Critical data will be defined by the government from time to time and has to be stored and processed in India. Any data that is non-critical and non-sensitive will be categorized as general data with no restriction on where it is stored or processed.
- Currently, there are no laws on the use of personal data and preventing its misuse, although the Supreme Court upheld the right to privacy as a fundamental right back in 2017.
- The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018, was prepared by a high-level expert group headed by former Supreme Court judge B.N. Srikrishna. However, interministerial consultations delayed its approval.
- The bill will encourage entities to start processing data in India and with high level of data consumption, the country is expected to become one of the world's biggest centres of data refinery. The bill allows processing of data for lawful purpose only

E-pharmacies in for more pain, but cure in sight

Why in news?

- The Centre has ordered a halt to online drug sales through unlicensed online platforms—e-pharmacies—as it works on rules to regulate the sector.

Concerns:

- Offline pharmacists have suffered due to the emergence of online sellers
- The sector has attracted a lot of investor interest in a short span of time

How are e-pharmacies different?

- E-pharmacies receive request for prescription and non-prescription medicines. For prescription drugs, the doctor's instruction note has to be uploaded.
- Medical devices like blood pressure and sugar monitor can also be ordered through them.
- These platforms then forward the orders to a licensed pharmacy in their network that is registered with the government authorities.
- They deliver the order to the customer through a courier. Some e-pharmacies also stock medicines and thus dispense directly.
- The new draft rules require all digital platforms engaged in this business to register with the



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regulator and be available for inspections.

How big is the sector, what is its growth rate?

- According to Digital Health Platforms, an association of entrepreneurs operating in the digital health industry, the sector caters to about 5 million patients a month.
- Research and Markets, a market research firm, estimates the industry size at ₹2,000-3,000 crore and expects it to grow at a CAGR of over 20% by 2024.
- Online pharmacies have so far attracted investments of over \$500 million from members of the Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association

What do e-pharmacies say about regulations?

- E-pharmacies claim they adhere to the existing laws
- Key players back the Centre's move, which they say would bring in accountability. The sector claims that the benefit of the digital system is a fully accountable and auditable track, so every transaction can be verified with its prescription and invoice.

What's the argument of offline chemists?

- Offline pharmacists have suffered due to the emergence of online sellers.
- According to the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists, patients risk revealing their private health issues due to the information they share online.
- It is concerned about the indiscriminate sale of habit-forming drugs, misuse of medicines and rising antimicrobial resistance.
- The industry body also claims loss of jobs. E-pharmacies, loaded with large private capital, offer 15-20% discounts, which offline retailers cannot match.

Prelims Facts:

Reservation for SCs and STs in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a proposal to extend reservation for SCs and STs in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for 10 years,
- The reservation for these categories in the Lok Sabha and assemblies was to expire on January 25, 2020.
- The government will bring a Bill to extend the reservation till January 25, 2030 in the ongoing winter session.

Fit India School Rating System launched as part of Fit India Campaign

- Envisioned by the Prime Minister, the nation-wide Fit India Movement aims to motivate every Indian to incorporate simple, easy ways of staying fit in their everyday life.
- The initiative is the need of the hour and it will lead the country towards a healthy future

UDAN

- The Union Government of India has launched the fourth round of UDAN (UdeDeshKaAamNagrik) to enhance the connectivity to regional areas of the country. This phase is to focus on Hilly states, North East Region, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir and Islands.

What is new in Phase 4?

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- The Viability Gap Funding has been revised. The funding that was provided for Category 2 and 3 aircrafts (> 20 seats) has now been enhanced to all flights in the states of HP, Uttarakhand, J&K, North Eastern states and the islands.
- Also, the phase will allow operation of helicopter and sea planes. The phase also plans to promote short-haul routes, meaning no monetary support will be given to operators with stages more than 600 kms.

Previous phases of UDAN

- In phase 1, around 43 airports were constructed under the scheme. It includes water aerodromes and heliports as well. In phase 2, around 30 airports were constructed and in phase 3, 33 airports were constructed.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation aims to operationalize 1000 routes and more than 100 airports in the next 5 years.

Joint Declaration of Intent

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was notified of Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) between India and Germany regarding strategic cooperation on Railways projects.
- The Joint Declaration of Intent was signed by Union Ministry of Railways with Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy of Federal Republic of Germany in November 2019.
- **Significance:** Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) will provide a platform to Indian Railways to interact and share latest developments and knowledge in field of Railways. JDI will also facilitate exchange of meetings, information, technical visits, expert seminars, as well as implementation of Indo-German jointly agreed cooperation projects.

MadhuApp

- Chief Minister of Odisha has launched a smart learning phone application 'MadhuApp' for school children. This app is aims to help school students in learning their lessons via videos and tutorials.
- The app named after 'UtkalGourab' Madhusudan Das, the first graduate and advocate of Odisha. The app has been developed by Ganjam district administration in accordance with the 5T action plan of state government. The 5T stands for Technology, Transparency, Teamwork, Transformation and Time.
- The app is equipped with video lectures and exercises in Odia language by leading subject experts and educationists. In 1st phase, the study material has been created for Mathematics and Science Subjects of classes V to VIII.