

INDIAN ECONOMY
CONTEXT: Supreme Court to hear challenge on Designation of bills as money bills
Why in news?

A request for priority to a referral regarding the way the Centre got important amendments passed in the Parliament as Money Bills is addressed by a seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India, presided over by the Chief Justice of India.

Which Amendments Were Passed Into Law as Money Bills?

- Amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA):
- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was amended in 2015, giving the Enforcement Directorate new and broad powers, including the ability to carry out raids and make arrests.
- The main issue is that these revisions were passed as Money Bills, which raises concerns about their validity and legality.
- Legal scholars and petitioners disagree about whether these major changes ought to have been approved by both chambers of Parliament as part of the regular legislative procedure.
 - **The Finance Act of 2017:**
- It raised questions regarding the appropriate use of this parliamentary method because it was enacted and classified as a money bill.
- Charges that classifying the 2017 Act as a Money Bill was a calculated attempt to increase executive control over these tribunals;
- Allegations that the Act sought to change appointments to 19 important judicial tribunals, including the Central Administrative Tribunal and the National Green Tribunal.
- The Act was passed with modifications that significantly reduced the education and work history needed to staff these important judicial bodies.
 - **Aadhar Act, 2016:**
- In 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the government's position, declaring the Aadhaar Act to be a lawful money bill in accordance with Article 110 of the Constitution.
- There were legal and procedural issues raised when the government claimed that the bill was legitimately classified as a Money Bill because the subsidies that are distributed through Aadhaar originate from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Money Bills restrict the power of the Rajya Sabha and are only available to the Lok Sabha.
- The CJI recently requested a more thorough review.
 - **What implications would the Bigger Bench Have?**
- Elucidation about the constitutionality of the Aadhaar Act, the PMLA, and the Tribunal changes.
- Determining if these laws were intended to evade Rajya Sabha scrutiny or were properly classified as money bills.
- Determination of whether these designations were tactical moves to evade oversight or legally sound.
- The deliberations among the broader bench may provide further perspectives on the extent of examination that the judiciary can perform with respect to the Speaker's decisions on measures that are designated as money bills.
 - **What is a Money Bill?**

A Money Bill is a type of financial legislation that only includes measures pertaining to government borrowing, spending, taxes, and revenue.

- **Constitutional Basis:**

- Pursuant to Article 110(1), a Bill shall be considered a money bill if it solely addresses the subjects mentioned in Article 110 (1) (a) to (g) — among other things, taxation, government borrowing, and allocation of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- A Money Bill may also be "any matter incidental to any of the matters specified in Articles 110(1)(a)-(f)," according to Article 110(1)(g).
- Article 110(3) of the Constitution states that the Speaker of the House of the People's decision is final in the event that a question arises over whether a bill is a money bill or not.
 - **procedure**
- Money Bills can only be introduced in the Lok Sabha; they cannot be introduced in the upper house, the Rajya Sabha.
- The Rajya Sabha lacks the authority to reject or change a money bill; it can only offer recommendations on them.
- The President may accept or reject a financial measure; but, it may not be returned for review.
- A joint sitting option is not offered.

Conclusion: Money bill is the most significant part of union budget and it deals with money matters. it is essential for the financial bill and gives data on tax collection and government spending .so a priority request is made challenging the designation of a bill as money bill in the supreme court which has to be heard by a seven member judges.

ENVIRONMENT ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY
CONTEXT: The inclusion of an excessive number of species in the revised schedules of the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022, without a measurable or repeatable method, has enraged many ecologists.

- **Why in news?**

- Significant modifications were made to India's fifty-year-old wildlife conservation law in 2022 by the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022, which amended the 1972 Act (WPA).
- Among the changes were the number and objectives of schedules. The previous six schedules under the WPA 1972 were "rationalized" to four schedules under the new legislation.
- With the new law, there are roughly 600 vertebrate species and hundreds of invertebrate species in Schedule 1, which offers the maximum protection, and about 2,000 species in Schedule 2, of which 1,134 are birds.

➤ **Conservation-related issues**

- The first problem with this designation has to do with conservation in general. The original goals of the WPA were to control commerce, police the trafficking of species, and govern the use of different species, including hunting.
- This is how the original Act was drafted, with the hunting section providing an exception for study. By linking itself with CITES and incorporating its appendices, the new Act goes one step further.
- There is no explicit mention of a link between conservation and endangerment in the Act.

➤ **The following are the immediate impacts of listing a species.**

- One would need to prioritise species even if there were benefits for conservation. There are hundreds of species of mammals, more than a thousand species of birds, and countless more taxa included, thus it's not clear how resources should be distributed based just on this list.
- The king cobra and rat snakes, the great Indian bustard and common barn owls, and tigers and jackals all receive the same degree of protection.
- Second, all actions have repercussions, generally negative ones in the legal system. For instance, cutting down native trees is prohibited by the Kerala and Karnataka Tree Preservation Acts.
- These Acts discourage plantation owners from growing native trees and instead encourage exotics like Silver Oak, which they can chop whenever necessary, rather than encouraging conservation.
- One particularly ridiculous outcome of listing, in the case of the WPA, has been the inclusion of the spotted deer (chital) in Schedule 1. These are widespread in India, but they are invasive in the Andaman Islands, where they have severely damaged the flora and wildlife. But because of the WPA, they cannot be lawfully eliminated or removed.

➤ **Impact on people**

- Various Schedule 1 species pose enormous physical, mental and economic harm to people. Elephants everywhere, leopards in some areas, and crocodiles in the Andaman's all murder people, ruin their livelihoods, and cause long-lasting psychological effects. Nonetheless, eminent conservationists glibly advise the populace to learn "coexistence."
- This point of view is enforced by the WPA. Since wild pigs and nilgai are now classified as Schedule 1 under the new Act, the few States that still permit the restricted killing of problematic animals may not be able to maintain that policy. This demonstrates complete disregard for the predicament of farmers and small-scale producers.
- Additionally, even in cases where hunting and animal use have been customary for hundreds of years, the WPA maintains a restricted stance on these topics. Use restrictions were put in place because the population of those species had decreased, but by the same reasoning, controlled use ought to be taken into account when animal populations are abundant, if only to maintain the standard of living for nearby communities. However, this is viewed as disgusting by many conservationists and inappropriate by the bureaucracy, with little regard for society or science.

➤ **Wildlife research issues:**

- Another problem is that the documentation required to obtain research permissions is time-consuming and laborious, even with the backing of numerous forest bureaucrats. Research may suffer greatly as a result of the listing of so many species.
- Environmental non-profits will find it more difficult to obtain licences for conservation and research, even with regard to common species like barn owls. It remains unclear if citizen science will be allowed to continue.
- Regrettably, despite complaining about how the WPA has affected their job, many ecologists have frequently shown insensitivity to the more significant problems at hand. Even while western scientists have come under fire for performing 'parachute research' in the Global South, many Indian ecologists have engaged in similar behaviour, gathering biological material and knowledge while leaving no benefits.
- We frequently supported policies that harmed the very communities we took advantage of. The Act that interferes with our job is a far greater threat to the lives of those it affects.
- In reality, attention must be paid to all three of these topics—research, people's issues, and conservation. Those whose lives are at stake need to be safeguarded first.
- Ecosystem, species biology, and context-specific management strategies are required for both species and habitats. Often, this calls for research or at least regular monitoring by independent agencies, which is hampered by the scheduling of species.

Conclusion:

Lastly, as long as the WPA respects the fundamentals of ethical animal care and do not unnecessarily harm populations, both ecologists and citizens have the right to study the natural world and gather data.

PRELIM FACTS

1. MQ – 9B drones

➤ **Context:**

- The United States has agreed to sell India 31 MQ-9B Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

- The arrangement is expected to be finalized by February 2024, with deliveries beginning in February 2027, a three-year gap after the contract is signed.
- **Deal Status and Timeline**
 - The MQ-9B UAV contract is proceeding as planned.
 - The US government's Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) is pending.
 - The contract is expected to be completed by February 2024.
- **UAV Maker's Commitment**
 - General Atomics (GA), a UAV manufacturer, is in the process of establishing a global maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility in India.
 - The specific site of the facility is unknown, but Bengaluru is a potential candidate.
- **Clearance and Costs**
 - In June, India's Defense Ministry authorized the purchase of 31 MQ-9B UAVs from GA for a total cost of \$3,072 million.
 - The purchase includes 15 Sea Guardians for the Navy, as well as eight Sky Guardians for both the Army and the Air Force.
- **Procurement Process**
 - The Letter of Request (LoR) was sent to the US government immediately before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's G-20 meeting with US President Joe Biden.
 - The Letter of Request (LoR) serves as the foundation for the Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA), which specifies equipment and procurement terms in accordance with the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program.
- **Approval and Conclusion**
 - The sale must be reported to the US administration and the US Congress.
 - Before the contract can be signed, the Indian government's Cabinet Committee on Security must approve it.

2. 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic diseases

- **Context:** The Union Health Secretary emphasized this at the National Conclave on "Augmented Zoonotic Disease Surveillance at the Human-Wildlife Interface."
- **About Zoonotic diseases:**
 - These are diseases that are naturally transmitted from vertebrate animals to humans or vice versa.
 - Zoonotic pathogens can be bacteria, viruses, parasites, or other unusual organisms. It can infect humans by direct contact, food, water, or the environment.
 - In India, they constitute a huge public health concern. Rabies, Brucellosis, Plague, and so on.
 - In India, 13 zoonoses cause 2.2 million deaths per year.
- **Reasons for emerging zoonotics**
 - Antibiotic usage in animals. Reduced forest cover enhances population contact and disease transmission.
 - There is a lack of information and skill in identifying zoonotic diseases, as well as diagnostic facilities.
 - Other factors include poor cleanliness, environmental contamination, farm animal husbandry malpractice, and so on.
- **Recommendations**
 - A One Health approach is required, which is an integrated, unifying approach to balancing and optimizing the health of people, animals, and the environment.
 - Creating a health adaptation plan for climate-sensitive zoonotic illnesses, assessing vulnerability, and so on.

3. Mount Vesuvius

- **Context:** Researchers utilized an AI program to decipher from an old manuscript that had been charred by Mount Vesuvius' explosion.
- **About Mount Vesuvius:**
 - It is one of the active volcanoes on Europe's mainland. Location: Naples, Italy.
 - It is a composite stratovolcano, made up of pyroclastic flows, lava flows, debris from lahars.
- **Stratovolcanoes** have steep sides and are more cone-shaped
 - In the last 17,000 years, the mountain has undergone eight large eruptions, the most recent in 1944.
 - Its most famous eruption occurred in A.D. Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed in 79.

4. Watershed Development (WD)

- **Context:** The Department of Land Resources (DOLR) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Remote Sensing Center for Watershed Development.
- **Objective:** High-resolution satellite data will be used to monitor the Watershed Development Component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana 2.0 (WDCPMKSY) projects.
- **PMKSY** is a centrally sponsored scheme to enhance physical access to increase irrigation, improve water use efficiency, etc.
- The Watershed Development (WD) component of PMKSY is implemented by DOLR.
 - A watershed is a geo-hydrological unit drained by a network of drains to a single point.

- WD refers to the conservation, regeneration, and wise use of all natural resources within the watershed, including land, water, plants, and wildlife, as well as human development.
- **Significance of WD**
 - Reduce disparities between irrigated and rain-fed areas.
 - Water supply that is consistent for home, agricultural, and industrial needs Reducing the waste of excessive river water flow, particularly during the Monsoon season
- **Challenges**
 - Irrigation projects place little emphasis on watershed planning and design.
 - Local stakeholder participation in planning and execution is decreasing.
 - Traditional watershed development strategies are given low attention.
 - Inadequate gathering of hydrological data.
- **Way-forward**
 - Collaborations with MDBs such as the World Bank on a global scale.
 - Using a decentralized and participatory development strategy
 - Initiation and implementation of site-specific watershed development actions such as soil, water, and biomass conservation.
 - For WD, training and community mobilization are required.

5.The High Cost of Cheap Water: World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) report on World Food Day

- **Context:** Water blindness is a lack of awareness and comprehension of the value of water resources, according to the paper.
- **In 2021**, the estimated global economic value of water was around US\$58 trillion, equivalent to **60% of the world's GDP**.
 - Direct economic benefits, such as household water usage and irrigation, total \$7.5 trillion per year.
 - Indirect economic benefits such as water purification and soil health total \$50 trillion each year.
- **Key threats to freshwater ecosystems**
 - Water overuse, notably by agriculture (which accounts for 70% of worldwide freshwater consumption).
 - The hydrological cycle is being disrupted by climate change, which limits water availability.
 - Water contamination caused by human activities such as fertilizer use and microplastics.
 - Infrastructure such as dams and river diversions alter and fragment the flow.
- **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**
 - Genesis: Established in 1961
 - About: International non-governmental organization working in the field of wildlife preservation.
 - Function: it works around six areas: food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests, and oceans. Report Living Planet Report (publishes every two years)
- **Recommendations**
 - **Government should**
 - Restore and protect vital freshwater ecosystems: Revitalize 30% of Degraded Rivers and Wetlands by 2030.
 - End Harmful Subsidies in agriculture and energy.
 - **Industry and business should**
 - Evaluate and reveal water risks from scarcity, pollution, and floods.
 - Implement water-saving technologies and advanced treatment to minimize wastewater generation.
 - **Financial institutions** should Invest in Nature-based Solutions for climate adaptation.

6.Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Concluded All 3 Rounds of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0 (IMI 5.0) Campaign

- **Context:** All States/UTs except Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Punjab concluded all 3 rounds.
- **About the IMI 5.0 campaign**
 - Aims to improve immunization coverage for all vaccines offered through the **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)** in accordance with the National Immunization Schedule (NIS).
 - It guarantees that routine immunization services are delivered to at-risk children and pregnant women across the country.
 - It is being carried out across the country and involves youngsters up to the age of five (previous campaigns included children up to the age of two).
 - A special emphasis is being placed on increasing vaccination coverage against Measles and Rubella in order to eradicate them by 2023.
 - In a pilot phase, it uses the U-WIN digital platform for Routine Immunization.
- **Mission Indradhanush** was launched in **2014** as a special catch-up campaign under the UIP, to cover the partially and unvaccinated children
 - A total of 5.06 crore children and 1.25 crore pregnant women have been cumulatively vaccinated till date.
- **UIP** provides free vaccines against 12 life-threatening diseases like TB, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis B, Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (only in endemic districts), etc.

ANSWER WRITTING

Q. Interstate Water Disputes are a continuing challenge to federal water governance in India In this light; discuss the reasons behind the prolonged existence of many interstate water disputes in the country. What steps ought to be done in order to successfully settle these conflicts?

Introduction

The majority of the 25 major river basins in India cross multiple states. In India, state-to-state river-water disputes (ISWDs) have occurred over a number of interstate rivers, including the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal, the Krishna water dispute, the Cauvery conflict, etc. Since rivers in India transcend state boundaries, creating equitable and effective mechanisms for distributing river flows has long been a crucial legal and constitutional concern.

The following are the reasons interstate water disputes have persisted for so long:

➤ **Uncertainty regarding federal jurisdiction:**

- Schedule 7 grants the Union Parliament the authority to create policies and procedures for managing interstate rivers. Regarding the use of water for things like water supply, irrigation, canals, drainage, embankments, water storage, and water power, the states still maintain their autonomy.
- Federal-jurisdictional uncertainty has been created by this approach to the formation of the legislative and constitutional system surrounding ISWDs, which has left the federal government and the states with an inaccurate distribution of power.

➤ **Geographical and historic ambiguities:**

- The political and cultural determinants of state borders have continued to shape Indian state boundaries, with little consideration for the natural and historical dynamics of these areas.
- The shifting borders create historical-geographical ambiguity in the control of interstate river water resources, making it more difficult to implement current jurisdictional and resource-sharing agreements. Eventually, these changes also serve as sources of political competition between states.

➤ **Political factors:**

- Water allocation is no longer the only issue at stake in India's interstate water disputes. Because of regional ambitions and electoral concerns, they have become extremely politicised. For example, the Cauvery dispute is frequently presented as a matter of ethnic identity involving the Tamilians and the Kannadigas.

➤ **Growing water scarcity:**

- Water stress is caused by the uneven distribution of water throughout the nation and by variations in monsoon rainfall patterns.
- The problem has been made worse in recent years by growing water scarcity and a sharp increase in the demand for freshwater from both urban and rural areas.

➤ **Opacity in the institutional framework:**

- The interstate water dispute settlement process has too many options and too much discretion at different points in time.
- This is partially due to complicated procedural issues involving numerous parties, including courts, state and federal governments, water tribunals, and others.

➤ **Delays in dispute resolution:**

- The nation's water conflicts are delayed because of drawn-out legal proceedings. For example, the water disputes around the Cauvery and Godavari rivers have been postponed for a very long time

➤ **Measures that can be taken to effectively resolve inter-state river water disputes include:**

- **Institutional structure for mediation:** To facilitate interstate mediation, an institutional framework must be established. In this situation, placing conflicts over river water under the interstate council's purview may aid in settling the conflict between the states.
- For the purpose of developing, managing, and regulating interstate rivers, the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) suggested a complete central legislative framework.
- A robust and durable institutional framework is required for interstate cooperation, coordination, and compliance.
- In order to effectively manage interstate rivers, the Sarkaria Commission has advocated the creation of a national data bank and information system.
- The current institutions and procedures for settling disputes over interstate rivers are insufficiently clear or specific. The increasing utilization of water resources raises the potential for conflictual situations. Therefore, it is imperative that the processes for resolving disputes be clarified.
- Educating the people about the harm that protracted conflict caused to the Economy, Environment and developmental issues
- The states in the basin should think about lowering their water demand by putting in place water-efficient agricultural patterns and techniques, such drip irrigation, given the nation's growing water crisis.

Conclusion

As river basins are shared resources, a coordinated approach between the states, with adequate involvement of the Centre, is necessary for the preservation, equitable distribution and sustainable utilization of river water Finding a long-term, mutually agreeable solution for the regulation of interstate river water should prioritise bolstering the institutional processes that are already in place and those that are developing, while also taking political sensitivities into consideration.

MCQS

1. Consider the following statements about Cloud Brightening
 1. Cloud brightening is a phenomenon that occurs when aerosols are injected into clouds by natural events such as volcanic eruptions.
 2. Marine Cloud Brightening is a solar geo-engineering technique that involves spraying sea salt into low-lying clouds to increase the reflectance of cloud cover
 Choose the correct statement(s)
 a) 1 only b) 2 only
 c) **Both 1 and 2** d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. Consider the following statements about Gulf of Guinea
 1. It is found at the junction of the Prime Meridian and the Equator at 0°0'N and 0°0'E.
 2. The Orange and Niger rivers drain into the Gulf of Guinea.
 Choose the **Incorrect** statement(s)
 a) 1 only b) **2 only**
 c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. With reference to the Money Bill, consider the following statements:
 1. Money Bills must be introduced in the Lok Sabha and cannot be introduced in the Rajya Sabha (the upper house).
 2. The President can either accept or reject a money bill but cannot return it for reconsideration.
 3. A provision for Joint sitting is included under the procedure related to the Money bills.
 How many of the statements given above are **Incorrect**?
 a) **Only one** b) Only two
 c) All three d) None
4. Consider the following statements with respect to 'Quantum States':
 1. A Quantum state is a mathematical description of the physical properties of a quantum system.
 2. Quantum states provide a complete specification of a system's properties, including its position, momentum, energy, spin, and other observable quantities.
 3. Bosons are particles that obey the Pauli exclusion principle, while fermions are particles that can share the same quantum state.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 a) Only one b) **Only two**
 c) All three d) None
5. Consider the following statements with respect to Tribal Youth Exchange Program (TYEP)
 1. The program aims to promote the aspirations of the youth in all tribal districts across India.
 2. The programme is implemented by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) with support of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
 a) 1 only b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2 d) **Neither 1 nor 2**
6. With reference to the "Habitat Rights", consider the following statements:
 1. It safeguards and promotes traditional livelihood and ecological knowledge passed down through generations.
 2. These are not given to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
 3. The Baiga community does not have these rights.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 a) **Only one** b) Only two
 c) All three d) None
7. The world's largest Hindu temple, Akshardham, constructed outside India in the modern era was recently inaugurated. It was constructed in accordance with old Hindu scriptures and incorporates elements of ancient Indian culture such as 10,000 figurines and statuettes, carvings of Indian musical instruments, and dancing styles. The temple is possibly the second largest after Angkor Wat in Cambodia. The temple — Akshardham is located in
 a) Florida b) Colorado
 c) Indiana d) **New Jersey**
8. With reference to the Global Hunger Index 2023, consider the following statements:
 1. It is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at multiple levels.
 2. India also has the lowest child wasting rate in the world.
 3. The prevalence of anaemia in women aged between 15 and 24 years stood at 58.1 percent.
 4. India is ranked last in Asia in the Global Hunger Index 2023.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 a) Only one b) **Only two**
 c) Only three d) All four
9. Consider the following statements:
 1. It is a crystalline metal with a layer of oxide on its surface, which makes it resistant to corrosion.
 2. Alloys containing this metal are used in jet engines.
 3. It is used in magnets for particle accelerators and MRI scanners due to its superconducting properties.
 4. It is obtained from the mineral columbite.
 The above-mentioned statements refer to which metal?
 a) Lithium b) Tellurium
 c) Germanium d) **Niobium**
10. Consider the following statements regarding Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.
 1. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is a statutory body under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change that is especially meant to combat organised wildlife crime in the country.
 2. It assists and advises the customs authorities in the inspection of the consignments of flora and fauna.
 3. It is headed by the Prime Minister of India.
 How many of the above statements is/are correct?
 a) Only one b) **Only two**
 c) All three d) None