

DAILY PT POINTERS

20th December, 2023



The Hindu: GS2-Polity and Governance (Page 1)

T.N. Minister convicted, faces disqualification

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister K. Ponmudy suffered a major jolt on Tuesday, with the Madras High Court convicting him and his wife, P. Visalakshi, in one of the multiple disproportionate assets cases faced by them.

The Minister now faces the threat of disqualification from membership of the Legislative Assembly with immediate effect, unless his conviction is stayed or set aside. His request for an appeal to the Supreme Court will be considered on Thursday.

'Palpably wrong'

Justice G. Jayachandran allowed an appeal preferred by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) in February 2017 and set aside an April 2016 order of acquittal passed by a special court for Prevention of Corruption Act

Case history

The High Court's decision comes 12 years after the FIR was first registered in the case in 2011.

Sept. 26, 2011:
DVAC registers FIR against K. Ponmudy, wife

April 18, 2016:
A special court for Prevention of Corruption Act cases in Villupuram acquits both of them

Feb. 2, 2017: Madras

High Court orders notices to the couple on an appeal preferred by the DVAC

Dec. 19, 2023:
Justice G. Jayachandran of the High Court reverses the acquittal and convicts them. They were told to appear before the court on Thursday for sentencing



(PCA) cases in Villupuram.

He declared that the trial court verdict, in favour of the Minister and his wife, was "palpably wrong, manifestly erroneous and demonstrably unsustainable".

The judge said that the prosecution had clearly proved that the couple was in possession of assets worth ₹1.72 crore disproportionate to their known sources of income during

the check period between April 13, 2006, and May 13, 2010, when Mr. Ponmudy had served as Minister for Higher Education and Mines.

Therefore, Justice Jayachandran found the Minister guilty of criminal misconduct under the PCA and his wife guilty of abetment.

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- According to Section 8(1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, a legislator convicted of an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) should be disqualified for a period of six years, from the date of conviction, if the punishment is limited to a fine.
- However, if a legislator is sentenced to any term of imprisonment under the PCA, then he or she should be disqualified from the date of conviction till the entire period of imprisonment and also for a further period of six years from the date of release, the Act says. The disqualification can be avoided only if the conviction, and not just the sentence, gets stayed or set aside.
- The Supreme Court has the power to stay not only the sentence, but also the conviction of a person.

The Hindu: GS2-IR (Page 16)

Netanyahu calls Modi to discuss maritime threat in Red Sea

The Israeli side started the call, says PMO; situation in Bab el-Mandeb has been worrying companies after Houthis' attack on container ships

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a telephone discussion on the escalating threats to maritime security in the Red Sea because of the actions of Houthi militants of Yemen. The conversation came soon after the Pentagon announced an international mission to counter the growing number of attacks against Israel-bound international traffic.

"Had a productive exchange of views with PM Netanyahu on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, including shared concerns on the safety of maritime traffic. Highlighted India's consistent stand in favour



Vital discussion: Narendra Modi and S. Jaishankar held several rounds of talks with stakeholders since the conflict began, AP

Mr. Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar have held multiple rounds of conversations with regional stakeholders since the conflict began in October.

The situation in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait has been worrying shipping companies after several attacks by Houthi rebels on container ships. These attacks have

led to the establishment of Operation Prosperity Guardian, an important new multinational security initiative," U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin said after the launch of the coalition that includes the U.K., Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the Seychelles, apart from the U.S. The United States

- The Red Sea is a semi-enclosed, inlet (or extension) of the Indian Ocean between the continents of Africa from Asia.
- It is connected to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean to the south through the Gulf of Aden and the narrow strait of Bab el Mandeb.
- **Bordering Countries:** Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti.



The Hindu : Health-GS2 (Page 16)

House panel doubts Centre's data on lumpy skin disease

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Questioning the Union Animal Husbandry Ministry's data that more than two lakh cattle and buffaloes had died by lumpy skin disease in 2022 and 2023, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing said there was a gap/mismatch in the number of cattle affected and dead, and the actual realities.

The panel said accurate data would have helped in understanding the gravity of the situation, and in controlling and containing the disease.

It recommended that the Centre ensure proper compilation of data on the spread of infection and mortality of cattle from the disease.

The panel said deaths of cattle had resulted in severe economic hardship to farmers and cattle owners. The Centre did not have any scheme to compensate for cattle losses due to spread of disease, the panel noted. It asked the Centre to make necessary provisions for compensating farmers.

The disease was spread in 23 States, and Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Pun-



Doctor vaccinating a cow who has been infected with lumpy skin disease. PTI

jab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka saw the most number of deaths when compared with the rest of the country. A total of 1,85,841 cattle died as on February 2023, while 32,73,762 were infected and 30,30,747 recovered. As many as 8,81,77,649 cattle were vaccinated. In 2023, 22,313 more deaths were reported.

The committee noted that Biovet Private Limited, Malur, Bengaluru; Indian Immunological, Hyderabad; and Institute of Veterinary Biological Products, Pune had secured the vaccine technology from the National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE), Hisar to manufacture indigenous homologous live attenuated LSD vaccine (LumpiPro-VacInd).

- Lumpy skin disease is caused by the lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV), which belongs to the genus capripoxvirus, a part of the poxviridae family (smallpox and monkeypox viruses are also a part of the same family).
- LSD affects the lymph nodes of the infected animal, causing the nodes to enlarge and appear like lumps on the skin, which is where it derives its name from
- It is not a zoonotic virus, meaning the disease cannot spread to humans.
- It is a contagious vector-borne disease spread by vectors like mosquitoes, some biting flies, and ticks and usually affects host animals like cows and water buffaloes.
- The disease was first observed in Zambia in 1929, subsequently spreading to most African countries extensively, followed by West Asia, Southeastern Europe, and Central Asia, and more recently spreading to South Asia and China in 2019.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu : GS 3-Economy (Page 17)

RBI tightens norms for AIF investments

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has tightened norms for Regulated Entities (RE) like banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies to prevent evergreening of loans via investments in Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).

The regulator said though REs do make investments in units of AIFs as part of their regular investment operations, certain transactions of REs involving AIFs had raised regulatory concerns.

"In order to address



concerns relating to possible evergreening through this route, it is advised that REs shall not make investments in any scheme of AIFs which has downstream investments either directly or indirectly in a debtor company of the RE," the regulator said.

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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

Indian Express: GS 2-Polity and Governance (Page 6)

Most Opposition members absent, Lok Sabha passes three key Bills

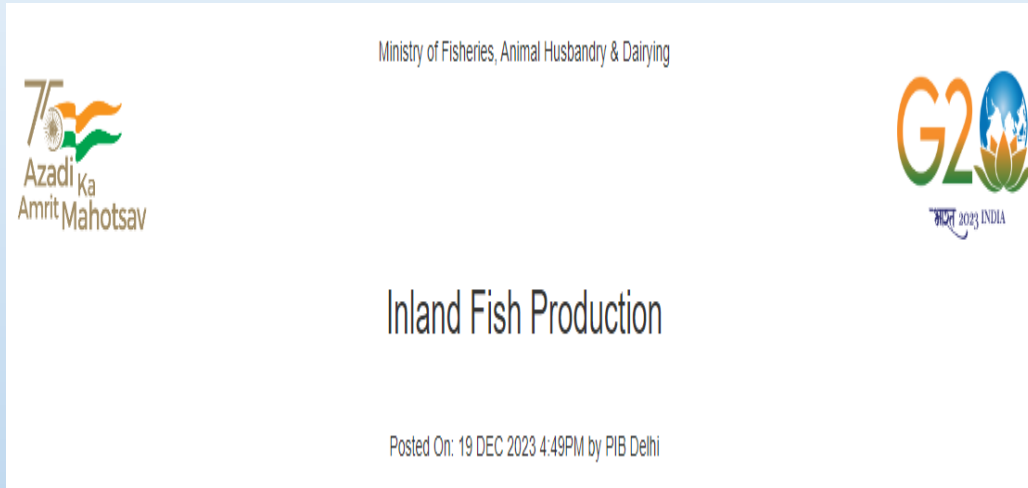
The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2023 aims to protect unauthorised colonies from demolition or sealing for three more years.



- The Lok Sabha passed three key Bills without any participation from Opposition members
 - The House passed The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2023; Central Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill; and the Provisional Collection of Taxes Bill, 2023
- The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2023 aims to protect unauthorised colonies from demolition or sealing for three more years.
- The GST Bill aims to bring certain sections of the CGST Act dealing with appellate tribunals in consonance with the Tribunal Reforms Act-2021.
- The Provisional Collection of Taxes Bill-2023 will give immediate effect to the changes in customs and excise duties announced in the Budget.
- It seeks to obtain the authority from Parliament to provisionally levy and collect the newly imposed or increased duties of customs and excise for 75 days.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

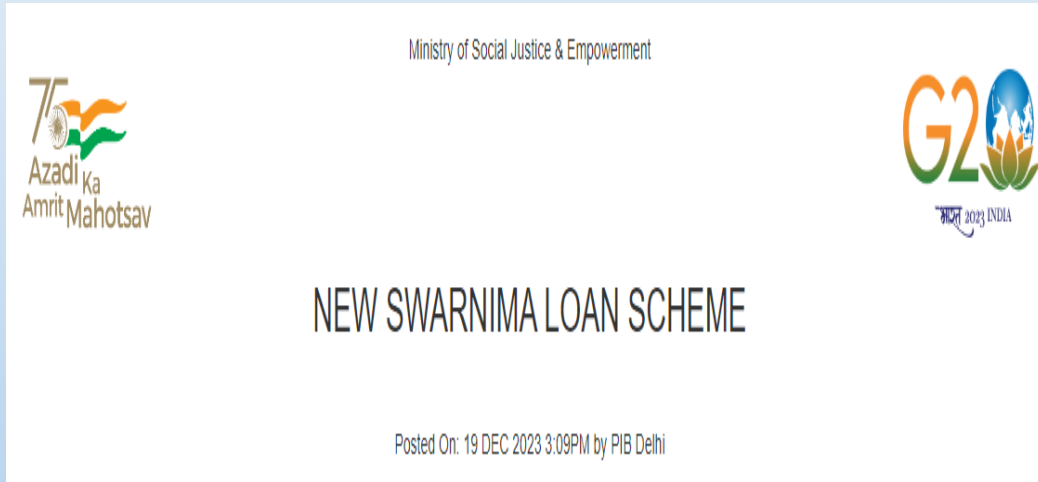
PIB: GS-3 Economy



- India is the 3rd largest fish producing country with around 8% share in global fish production.
- Globally, India stands 2nd in aquaculture production and is one of the top shrimp producing and exporting nations
- Since the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in the year 2020-21, the overall fish production in the country has shown an increasing trend

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB: GSI-Women Empowerment



NEW SWARNIMA SCHEME FOR WOMEN”

Objectives

Inculcating the spirit of self-dependence among the women of Backward Classes under Term Loan.

Eligibility

The women belonging to Backward Classes as notified by the Central/ State Governments from time to time shall be eligible for loan under this scheme.

Applicant’s annual family income should be less than Rs.3.00 Lakh.

Salient Features

The target group of the “New Swarnima” scheme of NBCFDC is the women belonging to Backward Classes having annual family income less than Rs.3.00 Lakh.

The beneficiary women is not required to invest any amount of her own on the projects up to cost of Rs.2,00,000/-.

The rate of interest on the amount of loan is less as compared to the general loan scheme of the Corporation.