Prelim Bits 09-05-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

New PMLA Rules

India brings chartered accountants, company secretaries under ambit of money laundering law.

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)

- The PMLA aims to prevent money laundering and to provide for the confiscation of property derived from money laundering.
- The PMLA was passed as a result of a global commitment to address the issue of money laundering.
- The Act prescribes that any person found guilty of money laundering shall be jailed from 3 years to 7 years; the maximum punishment may extend to 10 years instead of 7 years.
- **Objectives –** To prevent and control money laundering.
- To confiscate and seize the property obtained from the laundered money.
- To deal with any other issue connected with money laundering in India.

To know more about PMLA.

New Rules

- Finance Ministry said that the following professionals must maintain records of all deals done for their clients and they will be penalised if found to have dealt with funds from illegal sources.
- The financial transactions made by chartered accountants, company secretaries and cost and works accounts on behalf of their clients will now come under the ambit of PMLA, 2002.
- The Finance Ministry also explained who comes under the definition of relevant person and they will now come under PMLA:
    - Any individual who obtained a certificate of practice under section 6 of the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 and is practicing individually or through a firm.
    - Individuals who obtained a certificate of practice under section 6 of the Company Secretaries Act, 1980 and practicing individually or through a firm.
    - Individuals who have obtained a certificate of practice under section 6 of the Cost and Works Accountants Act, and practicing individually or through a firm, will all be guided by the new law.
- **Section 2(1) (sa) –** The current notification has been issued under section 2(1) (sa) of PMLA, 2002.
- This section defines person carrying on specified business or profession and already includes Gaming activity, Registration Authority, Real Estate Agents, Dealer in

precious metals and stones.
- Now, CA, CS, CMA has been included in above list for certain transactions.
- This means that they have now become reporting entity for the purposes of these transactions.

References

1. CNBC TV – India brings chartered accountants, company secretaries under ambit of money laundering law.
2. The Indian Express – Chartered accountants, company secretaries now under ambit of money laundering law.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Most Asia-Pacific countries ill-prepared for natural disasters: ESCAP.

UN-ESCAP

- The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the most inclusive intergovernmental platform in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The Commission promotes cooperation among its 53 member States and 9 associate members in pursuit of solutions to sustainable development challenges.
- ESCAP is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations.
- The ESCAP secretariat supports sustainable development in the region by generating action-oriented knowledge for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Findings

- **Lack data –** Countries in the region lack the necessary data as well as means to support adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- **Poverty –** In the absence of decisive action, climate change will remain a leading cause of poverty and inequality across the region.
- **Increased temperature –** Over the past 60 years, temperatures in the region have increased faster than the global mean.
- **Disasters –** Tropical cyclones, heatwaves, floods and droughts have brought immense loss of life and displacement, damaging people's health and pushing millions into poverty.
- Of the 10 countries most affected by these disasters, six are in the region.
- **Food systems –** Food systems here are being disrupted, economies damaged and societies undermined.
- **SDG –** If left unchecked, climate change will exacerbate the strains of ongoing overlapping crises and imperil Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- **Greenhouse emissions –** The Asia-Pacific region accounts for more than half of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Most populous –** It is one of the most rapidly developing regions of the world, with a significant proportion of the global population.
- **Vulnerable island states –** The region is also home to most of the world's low-lying cities and vulnerable small island states.

References

1. Down To Earth – Most Asia-Pacific countries ill-prepared for natural disasters: ESCAP.
2. UNESCAP – About ESCAP

World Thalassemia Day

On 8th May 1994, Thalassemia International Federation (TIF) observed World Thalassemia Day in memory of George Englezos.

Thalassemia

- Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder caused when the body doesn't make enough of a protein called haemoglobin, an important part of red blood cells.
- When there isn't enough haemoglobin, the body's red blood cells don't function properly and they last shorter periods of time, so there are fewer healthy red blood cells traveling in the bloodstream.
- Red blood cells carry oxygen to all the cells of the body.
- When there are not enough healthy red blood cells, there is also not enough oxygen delivered to all the other cells of the body, which may cause a person to feel tired, weak or short of breath.
- This is a condition called anaemia.
- People with thalassemia may have mild or severe anaemia.
- Severe anaemia can damage organs and lead to death.

Thalassemia is part of a group of disorders called hemoglobinopathies.

India

- In India, thalassemia, along with two other blood disorders, was recognised as a benchmark disability in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, of 2016.
- This brought a landmark shift in recognition and advocacy for thalassemia that went beyond the health sector and preventative awareness.

Thalassemia, Haemophilia and Sickle Cell Disorder all come under the umbrella of hemoglobinopathies.

- In the present context, thalassemia and other blood disorders are becoming part of the invisible disability discourse.
- The Government of India has been working on thalassemia prevention and management.
- The National Health Mission has come up with guidelines for the prevention and management of hemoglobinopathies.
- The mission is to improve the care of Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease patients and reduce the prevalence of hemoglobinopathies through screening and awareness strategies.

- Community education and awareness programs, sustainable carrier screening programs, premarital and pre-conception screening, and extended family screening are all part of the strategy.
- The goals include providing optimal care through day-care facilities and safe blood, financial support for essential medicines, early diagnosis and intervention protocols, and community education.
- The strategy aims to improve treatment and management options and make them available through public health facilities.

References

1. The Hindu – World Thalassemia Day
2. CDC – What is Thalassemia?

Arab League

Syria is back in the influential Arab League, more than a decade after being thrown out for its brutal repression of pro-democracy protests, which led to the ongoing civil war.

- The Arab League, formally known as the League of Arab States, was established in 1945 with initially just six nations: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.
- Currently, it has 22 member states, who have pledged to cooperate on economic and military affairs, among other issues.
- **Syria –** Syria was ousted from the Arab League in 2011 following President Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protests, which led to the ongoing civil war in the country.
- The conflict has since killed around half a million people and displaced about 23 million.
- The new move allows Syria to attend the upcoming Arab League Summit in Saudi Arabia.
- Saudi has called for a resolution of the civil war and the resulting refugee and drug smuggling crises.
- A committee involving Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq will soon be created to ensure Syria achieves these goals.

References

1. The Indian Express – Why has the Arab League reinstated the membership of Syria?
2. BBC – Syria reinstated as Assad rehabilitation continues

Title 42

The COVID restrictions, known as Title 42, were first implemented under Republican then-President Donald Trump in March 2020, is coming to an end now.

- The COVID restrictions, known as Title 42, were first implemented under Republican then-President Donald Trump in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic.

- At the time, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said the order was needed to stem the spread of the coronavirus in crowded detention settings.
- Title 42 allowed border agents to rapidly expel many migrants to Mexico.
- President Joe Biden kept Title 42 in place and expanded it as his administration grappled with record migrant arrests at the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Since its inception, migrants have been expelled more than 2.7 million times under Title 42.
- Although the total includes many repeat crossers and Mexico has generally only accepted certain nationalities.
- U.S. authorities aim to process migrants in days and swiftly deport them if they fail an initial asylum screening.

References

1. The Indian Express – Title 42 is ending at the U.S.-Mexico border.
2. CNN – Southern border braces for a migrant surge with Title 42 set to expire this week.

