



Current Affairs of the Day

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- An estimate of WASH across healthcare facilities in India.

GS III

- Highways keep snuffing out wild animals of Aravalis.
- The Wettest Place on Earth sees a decreasing trend in rainfall.



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Dire need: In all, 8,27,000 people in low- and middle-income countries die as a result of inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene each year. The issue of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is related to infection prevention and control.

WASH Status in India and Cost:

1. The status of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) in healthcare facilities is an important issue in development.
2. A 2019 joint global baseline report by WHO and UNICEF had pointed out that globally, one in four healthcare facilities lacked basic water servicing and one in five had no sanitation service and 42% had no hygiene facilities at point of care.

Impact of WASH

1. A WHO document on WASH in healthcare facilities points out that 8,27,000 people in low- and middle-income countries die as a result of inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene each year. Also, the death of 2,97,000 children under five years can be prevented each year if better WASH could be provided.
2. On a positive note, a 2012 WHO report had calculated that for every dollar invested in sanitation, there was \$5.50 to be gained in lower health costs, more productivity and fewer premature deaths.
3. Inadequacies in proving WASH and also lack of infection prevention and control can lead to healthcare-associated infections.
4. In the fight against the spread of antimicrobial resistance too, the importance of the prevention of infections cannot be overemphasised.

Worthy goal

It is noteworthy that ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation to all is one of the 2030 sustainable development goals of the WHO. The intersection between WASH, infection prevention and control and antimicrobial resistance is unique in that it offers policymakers an opportunity to address multiple overlapping problems through interventions on WASH in healthcare facilities.



Highways keep snuffing out wild animals of Aravalis

News: Delhi-Jaipur highway has seen many Nilgais, hyenas, golden jackals and even porcupines and hares left injured, maimed, or killed by speeding vehicles.

A passage for animals

1. Several wild animals, including leopards, were killed in road accidents on the three highways — Delhi-Jaipur Highway (NH-48), Gurugram-Alwar Highway (NH-248A) and Gurugram-Faridabad Highway — cutting through the Aravalis and fragmenting the wildlife habitat.
2. The authorities put around 20 signboards on NH-48 and Gurugram-Faridabad Highway warning the motorists to slow down.
3. Thermoplastic rumble strips are also fixed at five locations on the Gurugram-Faridabad Highway.
4. However, the more important task of underpasses on the three highways still remains. The three highways bisect the corridor used by the wildlife to traverse from Asola Wildlife Sanctuary in Delhi to Sariska in Rajasthan through Gurugram (Mangar -Bandhwari-Damdama).
5. Opening of the culverts, underpasses, Animal bridges and fencing along the highway could stop the death of wildlife in road accidents.
6. The forest policy calls for the creation of corridors to link the protected areas and funds are set aside for the protection of wildlife in projects through ecologically sensitive zones, but nothing substantial has been done.

The Wettest Place on Earth sees a decreasing trend in rainfall

News: The quiet, sleepy, yet mesmerising village of Mawsynram trounced Cherrapunji to become the wettest place in the world. Mawsynram receives over 10,000 millimetres of rain in a year. However, the place is under threat of decreased rainfall.

Highlights:

1. A recent study that looked at the rainfall pattern in the past 119 years found a decreasing trend at Cherrapunji and nearby areas.
2. Researchers noted that the changes in the Indian Ocean temperature have a huge effect on the rainfall in the region
3. Role of humans: the study also saw a decrease in vegetation cover and an increase in areas of cropland from the year 2006 onwards as a reason for decreased rainfall.



4. But why study the northeast region? The team writes that since northeast India is mostly hilly and is an extension of the Indo-Gangetic Plains, the region is highly sensitive to changes in regional and global climate.
5. It has to be noted that the first signs of the effect of climate change will be evident in extreme cases such as the rainfall at Cherrapunji.
6. Northeast India has the highest vegetation cover in India and includes 2 biodiversity hotspots of the world, indicating the importance of the region in terms of its greenery and climate-change sensitivity.

Way Forward:

We need to conserve the vegetation or forest area, biodiversity parks, the hills and valleys in the northeast. Also, solid water management strategies are inevitable to combat climate-induced changes in water bodies and groundwater. Long-term plans are necessary.