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MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



MK Yadav Sir

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INDIAN EXPRESS

Page 1

ARTICLE 361 OF THE CONSTITUTION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

SC to look at immunity to Governors under Art 361

Says Centre to be made party to petition, seeks A-G help too

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

THE SUPREME Court on Friday agreed to examine the question of immunity to Governors from any kind of criminal prosecution, granted under Article 361 of the Constitution.

The Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, was hearing a plea filed by a contractual woman employee of West Bengal Raj Bhavan, who has alleged sexual harassment by Governor C V Ananda Bose.



West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose

"The petition raises the issue as regards the interpretation of Clause (2) (of Article 361), more particularly when criminal proceedings would be construed to have been instituted in terms of the governing provisions of law," the Bench, which included Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Context: The Supreme Court agreed to examine the question of immunity to Governors from any kind of criminal prosecution, granted under Article 361 of the Constitution.

Article 361 of the Constitution

- **About**: It deals with immunity for the President and Governors, stating that they shall not be answerable to any court for their official actions or for any acts done in the performance of their duties.
- **Two Crucial Sub-Clauses**
  - **Sub-Clause 1**: No criminal proceedings shall be initiated or continued against the President or Governor of a State during their term of office.
  - **Sub-Clause 2**: No process for the arrest or imprisonment of the President or Governor of a State shall issue from any court during their term of office.
- **Accountability and Criminal Proceedings**: Governors cannot be held accountable to any court for their official duties, and no criminal proceedings can be initiated against them during their term.
- **Civil Proceedings**: It can be brought against Governors for their personal acts after giving two months' notice.
- **Protection from Arrest:** Governors cannot be arrested or imprisoned while in office.
- **Post-Term Prosecution:** If a Governor commits any criminal offense during their term, they can be prosecuted once their term ends, ensuring they are not above the law.

Supreme Court on the Immunities Enjoyed by the Governor

- **Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India**: The Supreme Court outlined the immunity enjoyed by the Governor even in cases of personal malafides, holding that the Governor enjoys complete immunity from being answerable to any court for their official duties and acts.
- **Babri Masjid Demolition Case 1992**: In 2017, the Supreme Court allowed fresh charges of criminal conspiracy against various leaders. However, the trial for former UP Chief Minister Kalyan Singh did not proceed as he was the Governor of Rajasthan at that time.

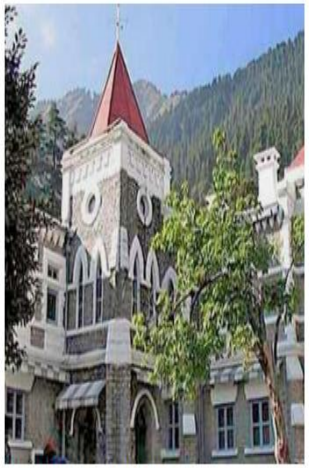
THE HINDU Page 10

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE
(Syllabus GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Uttarakhand HC allows protection to interfaith live-in couple under UCC

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The court said that if the petitioners apply for registration under UCC within 48 hours, they shall be provided adequate protection for a period of six weeks



A view of the Uttarakhand High Court.

In the first such case after the Uniform Civil Code of Uttarakhand Act came into force, the High Court recently allowed protection to an interfaith couple in a live-in relationship, provided they apply for mandatory registration under the new Act within 48 hours.

The July 18 judgment came while hearing a petition filed by a 26-year-old Hindu woman and 21-year old Muslim man who were in a live-in relationship for some time.

The couple claimed that the parents and the brother of one of the petitioners were extending threats to them. The couple currently lives in Dehradun.

During the hearing, the counsel for Uttarakhand State submitted in the High Court that under Section 378(1) of the recently enforced Uniform Civil Code (UCC), it is obligatory for partners of a live-in relationship within the State, whether they are residents of Uttarakhand or not, to submit a statement of their relationship to the registrar within whose jurisdiction they are living. And that failure to do so may result in a jail sentence of up to three months or a fine of up to ₹10,000 or both.

The Division Bench of Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari and Justice Pankaj Purohit disposed the petition, saying that "...if petitioners apply for registration under the aforesaid Act within 48 hours, the SHO, PS Dalanwala, Dehradun shall provide adequate protection to petitioners for a period of six weeks to ensure that no harm is caused to them from the private respondents or any other person acting on their behest".

Speaking to *The Hindu*, advocate Mohad Matlub, who represented the couple, said that the petitions challenging the UCC were pending before the Supreme Court.

He added that Article 21 of the Constitution, 'Protection of Life and Personal Liberty', ensures that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

"I cannot comment on the court's judgment but as promised, my clients had applied for registration at the marriage registrar's office which has currently refused to entertain the same citing some technical reasons," he added.

Context: In a landmark ruling under Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC), the Nainital High Court granted protection to an interfaith live-in couple, allowing them 48 hours to apply for registration under the Act.

Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

- **Meaning:** The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) calls for the formulation of **one law for India**, which would be **applicable to all religious communities** in matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption.
  - Besides Uttarakhand, only Goa had UCC which was implement by Portuguese in 1867.
- **Article 44**: Of the Constitution, under **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP),** lays down that the state shall endeavour **to secure a Uniform Civil Code** for the citizens throughout the territory of India.
- **Origin of UCC**: The UCC's roots trace to colonial India, as the British government's 1835 report highlighted the importance of consistent laws for crimes, evidence, and contracts, excluding the personal laws of Hindus and Muslims.
- **History of Uniform Civil Code**
  - During their rule in Goa and Daman & Diu, the Portuguese separately codified the local customs of each of these territories.
  - After liberating the territories in 1961 and integrating them into a Union Territory, the Indian government declared that the Portuguese laws, including the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867, would continue until amended or repealed by a competent authority.
- **Benefits of UCC**
  - It provides equal status (Article 14) to all citizens irrespective of the community they belong to.
  - A UCC could lead to consistency and gender equality when it comes to personal laws, and usher in some much-needed reforms.
  - It could help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to laws which have conflicting ideologies.

DECCAN HERALD

July 19

PHLOGACANTHUS SUDHANSUSEKHARII

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

New plant species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

Context: Researchers from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have recently discovered a new plant species, Phlogacanthus sudhansusekharii, in the Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh.



Phlogacanthus Sudhansusekharii

- **About**: It is a newly discovered plant species that belongs to the family Acanthaceae and the genus Phlogacanthus.
- **Discovery Location**: It was discovered in the Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Name Origin**: The species is named to honor Dr. Sudhansu Sekhar Dash, a scientist at the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), for his significant contribution to plant and ecological research in the Indian Himalayan region.
- **Genus Information**: The genus Phlogacanthus comprises 13 species in India, predominantly found in the northeastern and eastern Himalayan states.

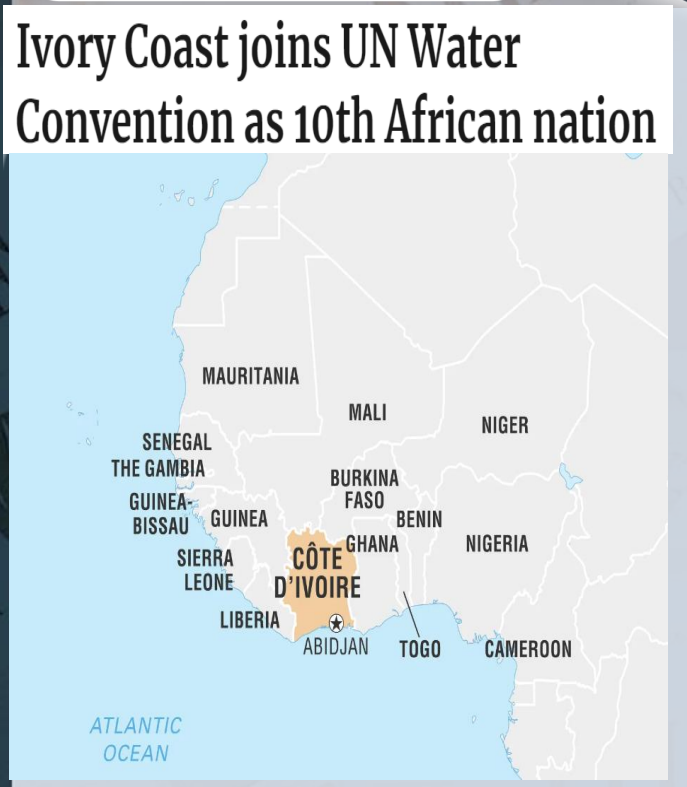
Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Location**: It is a protected area located in Naharlagun, near the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Area Coverage**: The sanctuary covers an area of 140.30 sq. km.
- **Borders**: It shares borders with the Pam River in the east, Pachin in the south, Neorochi in the northeast, and Chingke stream in the north.
- **Flora**: The forest is a heterogeneous mixture of evergreen and semi-evergreen forest types.
- **Fauna**: Tgers, leopards, clouded leopards, elephants, barking deer, sambar, and various primate species such as hoolock gibbons and macaques.
    - The sanctuary also houses numerous bird species, including hornbills, eagles, and pheasants.

DTE July 19

UNITED NATIONS WATER CONVENTION

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)



Ivory Coast

- **About:** It is located on the coast of western Africa.
- **Bounded with**: North by Mali and Burkina Faso, to the east by Ghana, to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, to the southwest by Liberia, and to the northwest by Guinea.

Context: Ivory Coast joined the United Nations Water Convention, becoming the 10th African nation to do so.

United Nations Water Convention

- **About**: It is also known as the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.
- **Adoption**: Adopted in Helsinki in 1992
- **Enforcement**: 1996
- **Legal Instrument**: It is a unique, legally binding instrument that promotes sustainable management of shared water resources, the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the prevention of conflicts, and the promotion of peace and regional integration.
- **History**: Initially negotiated as a regional framework for the pan-European region, it became accessible to all UN Member States following an amendment procedure in March 2016.
- **Recent Accessions:** Chad and Senegal became the first African Parties in 2018.
    - Iraq acceded in March 2023 as the first Middle Eastern country, Namibia in June 2023 as the first Southern African country.
    - Panama in July 2023 as the first Latin American country.
- **Party Obligations**: The convention requires Parties to prevent, control, and reduce transboundary impacts, use transboundary waters reasonably and equitably, and ensure their sustainable management.
- **Cooperation Requirement**: Parties sharing transboundary waters must cooperate by entering into specific agreements and establishing joint bodies.
- **Framework Agreement**: As a framework agreement, it does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements for specific basins or aquifers but fosters their establishment, implementation, and further development.
- **Significance**: The convention is a powerful tool to promote and operationalize the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

PIB July 19

KIRTI PROGRAM
(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Sports)

Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Program to get Fresh Boost from Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya

Context: The Government's ambitious Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) program is set to get a fresh boost under the leadership of the Union Minister for Youth Affairs.

Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Program

- **About**: It has been envisioned to develop an integrated talent identification architecture based on modern ICT tools and global best practices.
- **Objective**: It aims to streamline the whole process of grassroots talent identification on a single platform.
- **Based on**: An athlete-centric approach wherein at every step the process of Talent Identification has been made more broad-based and accessible.
- **Target Age Group**: It is aimed at school children between nine and 18 years of age.
- **Launch and Initial Assessment**: KIRTI made a solid launch across 50 centres in India, assessing fifty thousand applicants in the first phase across 10 sports, including athletics, boxing, wrestling, hockey, football, and wrestling.
- **Assessment Goals**: The program aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments throughout FY 2024-25 to identify talent through notified Talent Assessment Centres.
- **Selection Methodology**: Its athlete-centric programme features a transparent selection methodology based on Information Technology. Data analytics and Artificial Intelligence are used to predict the sporting acumen of aspiring athletes.
- **Decentralized Approach**: The program's decentralized and pocket-based talent identification approach supports the twin objectives of the Khelo India Scheme: excellence in sports and mass participation in sports.

HINDUSTAN TIMES

July 19

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - IR)

India backs Mauritius' efforts to reclaim Chagos Archipelago



Context: India has reiterated its support for Mauritius in its sovereignty dispute with the UK over the Chagos archipelago.

Chagos Archipelago

- **Location**: It is situated approximately 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) south of India and Sri Lanka.
- **Physiography**: It consists of about 60 small islands, with the largest and most significant being Diego Garcia.
- **Climate**: They have a tropical climate with warm temperatures year-round, high humidity, and seasonal rainfall.
- **Biodiversity**: It is known for its rich biodiversity, including coral reefs, various species of fish, and seabirds.
- **Marine Protection**: It is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory Marine Protected Area, which aims to conserve its unique marine environment.

Territorial Dispute and Historical Background

- **Dispute**: The territorial dispute is between Mauritius and the United Kingdom (UK).
- **Historical Context**: It was originally a part of the British colony of Mauritius.
- **Separation**: In 1965, the UK separated it from Mauritius and established it as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).
- **Lease to the US:** In 1966, Britain leased Diego Garcia to the United States, which was seeking a military base in the region.
- **Mauritian Claim:** Mauritius, which gained independence from Britain in 1968, has consistently maintained its claim over the Chagos Islands.
- **Current Status**: In 2019, the International Court of Justice ruled that the UK had no right to govern the Chagos Islands and urged it to withdraw from the archipelago.

iCAL
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity/Governance)

Comptroller and Auditor General GC Murmu inaugurates International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL) at Rajkot

Context: Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India inaugurated the International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL) in Rajkot.

International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL)

- **About:** It is a pioneering initiative by SAI India
- **Primary Objectives**
  - **Developing and Enhancing Standards**: iCAL focuses on establishing and improving standards for Local Government Audits.
  - **Strengthening Data Collection and Reporting**: iCAL aims to bolster how data is collected and reported within local governments.
  - **Training**: The initiative provides comprehensive training and leadership development for auditors, executives, and elected representatives.
  - **Supporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**: iCAL emphasizes the role of Local Governments in achieving SDGs by fostering grassroots engagement and citizen accountability.
- **Achieving Sustainable Development Goals:** iCAL supports Local Governments in reaching SDGs by encouraging community engagement.
- **Addressing Global Challenges**: The platform helps tackle issues such as climate change and the blue economy, essential for effective policy implementation and grassroots economic growth.

Local Bodies Audit in India

- **Three-Tier Governance Structure**: India's governance includes the Union, state, and local bodies, with Panchayati Raj Institutes (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) managing self-governance.
- **Role of State Government Auditors**: Many state governments appoint an Examiner of Local Fund Accounts (ELFA) or Director of Local Fund Accounts (DLFA) to audit local body accounts.
- **Function of ELFA and CAG:** The ELFA audits state-granted funds, while the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) oversees all levels of PRIs/ULBs, providing technical guidance and support to state auditors.

WION July 19

SHADOW CABINET

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Polity)

Odisha's opposition BJD forms shadow cabinet to counter BJP. Here's what it means

Context: Recently, Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Odisha has formed a Shadow Cabinet in legislative assembly to track Government Works.

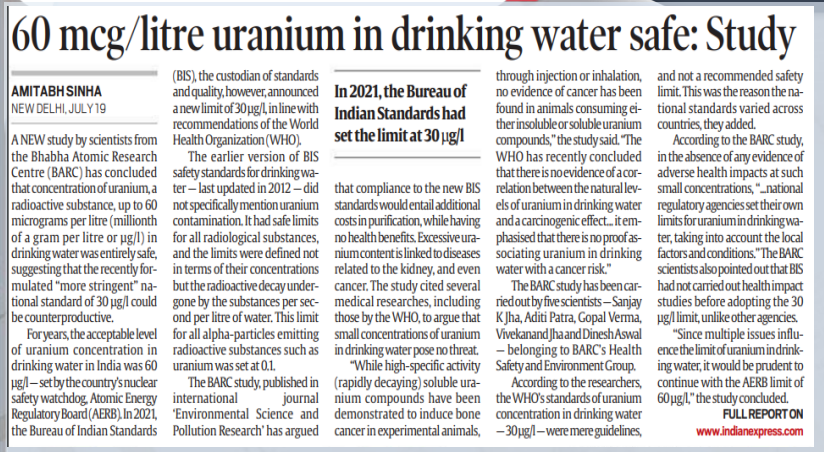
Shadow Cabinet

- **Origin**: The Shadow Cabinet is a distinctive feature of the British Cabinet system.
- Formation
- **Opposition's Role**: It is created by the opposition party to balance the ruling cabinet and prepare its members for potential ministerial roles.
- **Shadowing Members**: Almost every member of the ruling cabinet is 'shadowed' by a corresponding member in the opposition.
- **Role of Shadow Cabinet**
    - **Alternate Cabinet**: Functions as a potential alternative government if there is a change in administration.
    - **Alternative Prime Minister**: Ivor Jennings described the Leader of the Opposition as the 'alternative Prime Minister' due to the significance of the Shadow Cabinet.
- **Countries:** Exists in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.
- **UK Structure:** In Britain, the opposition is officially recognized and organized similarly to the government, running a 'Parallel' government with its Shadow Cabinet.
- **In India:** Currently lacks an official Shadow Cabinet in Parliament, and there is no legal mandate for it.
- **Potential Amendments:** The Parliament could amend its rules to formally recognize the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) and allow the appointment of a Shadow Cabinet.
- **State Experiments**: Maharashtra, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Goa have previously experimented with Shadow Cabinets.
- **Benefits:** By shadowing ministries, MLAs/MPs gain valuable knowledge and expertise, which enhances their participation in assembly debates.

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 10

CONCENTRATION OF URANIUM

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Health)



60 mcg/litre uranium in drinking water safe: Study

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

A NEW study by scientists from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has concluded that concentration of uranium, a radioactive substance, up to 60 micrograms per litre (millionth of a gram per litre or µg/l) in drinking water was entirely safe, suggesting that the recently formulated "more stringent" national standard of 30 µg/l could be counterproductive.

For years, the acceptable level of uranium concentration in drinking water in India was 60 µg/l — set by the country's nuclear safety watchdog, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). In 2021, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the custodian of standards and quality, however, announced a new limit of 30 µg/l, in line with recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The earlier version of BIS safety standards for drinking water — last updated in 2012 — did not specifically mention uranium contamination. It had safe limits for all radiological substances, and the limits were defined not in terms of their concentrations but the radioactive decay undergone by the substances per second per litre of water. This limit for all alpha-particles emitting radioactive substances such as uranium was set at 0.1.

The BARC study, published in international journal 'Environmental Science and Pollution Research' has argued

In 2021, the Bureau of Indian Standards had set the limit at 30 µg/l

that compliance to the new BIS standards would entail additional costs in purification, while having no health benefits. Excessive uranium content is linked to diseases related to the kidney, and even cancer. The study cited several medical researches, including those by the WHO, to argue that small concentrations of uranium in drinking water pose no threat.

"While high-specific activity (rapidly decaying) soluble uranium compounds have been demonstrated to induce bone cancer in experimental animals, through injection or inhalation, no evidence of cancer has been found in animals consuming either insoluble or soluble uranium compounds," the study said. "The WHO has recently concluded that there is no evidence of a correlation between the natural levels of uranium in drinking water and a carcinogenic effect... it emphasised that there is no proof associating uranium in drinking water with a cancer risk."

The BARC study has been carried out by five scientists — Sanjay K Jha, Aditi Patra, Gopal Verma, Vivekanand Jha and Dinesh Aswal — belonging to BARC's Health Safety and Environment Group.

According to the researchers, the WHO's standards of uranium concentration in drinking water — 30 µg/l — were mere guidelines, and not a recommended safety limit. This was the reason the national standards varied across countries, they added.

According to the BARC study, in the absence of any evidence of adverse health impacts at such small concentrations, "...national regulatory agencies set their own limits for uranium in drinking water, taking into account the local factors and conditions." The BARC scientists also pointed out that BIS had not carried out health impact studies before adopting the 30 µg/l limit, unlike other agencies.

"Since multiple issues influence the limit of uranium in drinking water, it would be prudent to continue with the AERB limit of 60 µg/l," the study concluded.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Context: A new study by scientists at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) finds that uranium concentrations up to 60 µg/l in drinking water are safe, challenging the recent national standard of 30 µg/l as potentially counterproductive.

Uranium

- **About**: It is a naturally occurring element found in low levels within all rock, soil, and water.
- **Radioactivity**: It is a weak radioactive substance due to its long physical half-life.
- **Significant Quantities**: Uranium is the highest-numbered element found naturally in significant quantities on earth.
- **Nephrotoxicity:** Uranium is nephrotoxic and can adversely affect health at very high concentrations.
- **Health Risks:** People relying on groundwater with uranium are at increased risk of impaired renal function, kidney disease, and other health issues such as bone toxicity.

Key Findings of Environmental Science and Pollution Research

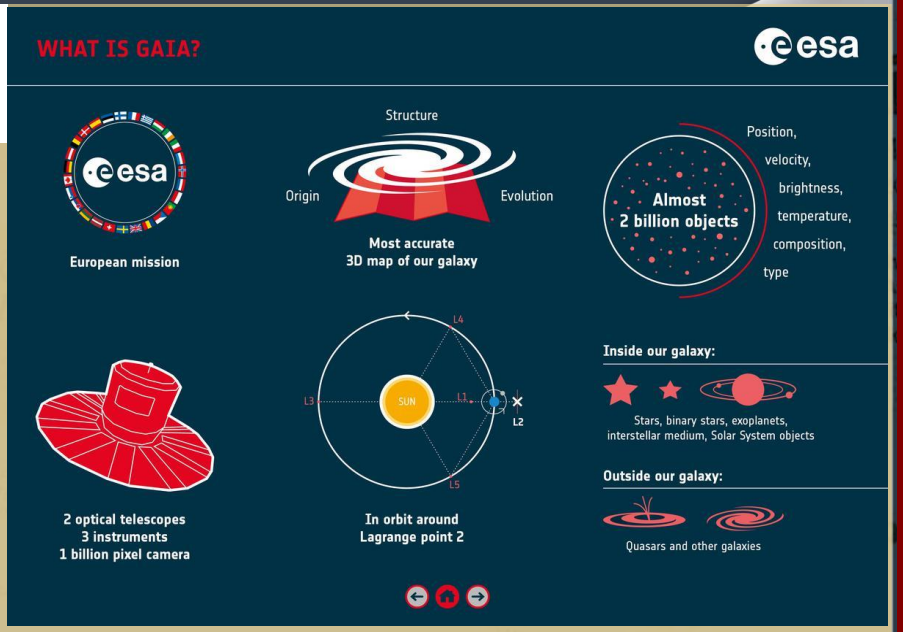
- **Research Findings**: The WHO's standard of 30 µg/l for uranium in drinking water is a guideline, not a safety limit.
- **Variation in National Standards**
- **Different Limits:** Countries have varying safety limits for uranium in drinking water:
  - **Finland**: 100 µg/l
  - **Slovakia**: 350 µg/l
  - **South Africa**: 70 µg/l
  - **Canada:** 20 µg/l
  - **Australia**: 15 µg/l
  - **India:** As per report titled **Groundwater yearbook 2021-2022, 12 Indian states** have uranium levels beyond permissible limits in their groundwater..
- **Factors Influencing National Standards**: National standards should consider geological, socio-economic, and population dynamics factors.
- **Local Adaptation:** Some countries set their own limits based on local conditions, acknowledging the need for specific standards.
- **BIS vs. EPA**: Unlike the EPA, the BIS did not conduct health impact studies before setting its limit of 30 µg/l.
  - The EPA's analysis showed no significant health difference between limits of 20 µg/l, 30 µg/l, and 80 µg/l, leading to the establishment of 30 µg/l as a reasonable standard.

GAIA SPACECRAFT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Gaia spacecraft, mapping a billion stars in space, hit by micrometeoroid

Context: Recently, the Gaia spacecraft has successfully overcome significant challenges in its mission to map over a billion stars in the Milky Way.



Gaia Spacecraft

- **Launched**: The Gaia spacecraft was launched by the European Space Agency (ESA) in December 2013.
- **Position**: It is located 1.5 million kilometers from Earth at the second Sun-Earth Lagrange point (L2).
- **Mission Objectives**
  - **Star Monitoring:** The spacecraft monitors each of its target stars approximately 14 times per year, charting their positions, distances, movements, and brightness changes.
  - **Discovery Goals**: Gaia is expected to discover hundreds of thousands of new celestial objects, such as extra-solar planets and brown dwarfs, and observe hundreds of thousands of asteroids within our Solar System.
  - **Quasar and Relativity Studies:** The mission is also studying more than 1 million distant quasars and providing stringent new tests of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity.
  - **Camera Precision**: Capable of resolving the diameter of a human hair from 1,000 km away.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

- **Optical Telescopes and Instruments**: Gaia contains two optical telescopes and three science instruments to precisely determine star locations, velocities, and to split their light into a spectrum for analysis.
- **3D Galactic Mapping**: The spacecraft is creating an extraordinarily precise three-dimensional map of nearly two billion objects throughout our Galaxy and beyond, mapping their motions, luminosity, temperature, and composition.
- **Stellar Census**: The extensive stellar census provided by Gaia is crucial for addressing a wide range of important questions related to the origin, structure, and evolutionary history of our Galaxy.

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