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News: Only 4 States adopt Model Tenancy Law

- In response to a question by BJP member Ashok Bajpai, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Kaushal Kishore said, “As per information available with MoHUA, the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Assam have revised Tenancy Acts on the lines of Model Tenancy Act (MTA).”

Model Tenancy Act, 2019

- This is a **model act, giving the states the freedom to accept or reject** it as **Land is a state subject** in the Schedule VII of Constitution.
- It stipulates a robust **grievance redressal mechanism comprising of Rent Authority, Rent Court and Rent Tribunal.**
- Landlords will also be able to **charge rents that are to be decided by state governments.**
- Security deposit equal to a maximum of **2 month’s rent in case of residential properties and a maximum of 6 month’s rent in case of non-residential property.**
- A minimum of 3-month notice must be given in written before revising the rent.

- Tenant's overstaying will have to pay a double rent for two times and four times thereafter.
- After the coming of force of this Act, no person shall let or take on rent any premises except by an agreement in writing.
- It is prospective in nature and won't affect the existing tenancies.
- It is applicable to the entire state (both Urban and Rural).
- It is mandatory for both landlord and tenant to inform the rent authority after getting into an agreement. This reduces the arbitrary increase of rent and eviction at the whim of landlord.
- A digital platform will be set up in the local vernacular language of the State for submitting tenancy agreements.
- The landlord will be responsible for activities like structural repairs except those necessitated by damage caused by the tenant, whitewashing of walls and painting of doors and windows, etc.
- The tenant will be responsible for drain cleaning, switches and socket repairs, kitchen fixtures repairs, replacement of glass panels in windows, doors and maintenance of gardens and open spaces, among others.
- If the landlord refuses to carry out the required repairs, the tenant can get the work done and deduct the same from periodic rent.

- The land lord is prohibited from entering the **rent premises without a 24-hour notice to carry out repairs and cutting down power / water supply in case of dispute with the tenant.**

News: India adds five more Ramsar sites

- India has added five more Ramsar sites, or wetlands of international importance, bringing the number of such sites in the country to 54.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

- Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that **provides the framework for national action** and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem.
- The Treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in **2nd February 1971** and came into force in 1975 (1st February 1982, in India).
- Firstly, it is a requirement for each country, when depositing its instrument of ratification or accession, to designate at least one wetland in its territory for the List of Wetlands of International Importance.
- RAMSAR Secretariat is the headquarters **of the IUCN located in Gland, Switzerland.**

- **World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February second** for the commemoration of signing of Ramsar Convention.
- Conference of the contracting parties (COP) is held **once in every 3 years**.
- India is the **country with most Ramsar sites in South Asia with 54 entries** (as per July 2022).
- The **total area covered** by all these sites accounts to **11,000 hectares** or 10 of total wetland area in the country — across 18 States.
- The countries with the most Ramsar Sites are the **United Kingdom (175) and Mexico (142)**, as per the Ramsar List. **Bolivia has the largest area** with 148,000 sq km under the Convention protection.
- COP 13: Dubai, United Arab Emirates in 2018 with the theme “**Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future**”.
- The wetlands in the four extremes of our country are: Northernmost – Wular Lake, Southernmost – Ashtamudi lake, Easternmost – Loktak Lake and Westernmost – Nalsarovar Lake.
- Karnataka is the only South Indian state to not have a Ramsar Site.
- Only 4 states in the Northeast have a Ramsar Site: **Assam** (Deepor Beel), **Tripura** (Rudrasagar Lake), **Manipur** (Loktak Lake) and Mizoram (Pala Wetlands).

Wetlands

- Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They include mangroves, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, coral reefs, marine areas no deeper than 6 meters at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

Criteria for Selecting a RAMSAR site

- There are 9 criteria to be selected as a RAMSAR Site. Fulfilling any of the criteria will entitle the status of RAMSAR site.
- Criterion 1: If the site is representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.
- Criterion 2: if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.
- Criterion 3: if it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region.
- Criterion 4: if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.
- Criterion 5: if it regularly supports 20,000 or more water-birds.

- Criterion 6: if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of water-bird.
- Criterion 7: if it supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contributes to global biological diversity.
- Criterion 8: if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.
- Criterion 9: if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of wetland-dependent non-avian animal species.

Latest Ramsar Sites from India

- **Thoi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary and Wadhvana Wetland from Gujarat** (These are the second and third sites from Gujarat after Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary listed in 2012).
- Sultanpur National Park and Bhindhwas Wildlife Sanctuary from Haryana. (These two are the first Ramsar Sites from the state of Haryana).
- Haiderpur Wetland from Uttar Pradesh.

- Khijadiya wildlife sanctuary in Gujarat and Bakhira wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh in February 2022.
- Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest and Pichavaram Mangrove in Tamil Nadu, the Sakhya Sagar in Madhya Pradesh and the Pala Wetlands in Mizoram.

Montreux Record

- The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance **where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.**
- It is **maintained as part of the Ramsar List.**
- Currently **Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan and Loktak Lake in Manipur** are in the Montreux List.
- **Chilika Lake in Odisha was formerly placed** in the record, but was later removed from it.
- It is a voluntary mechanism to highlight specific wetlands of international importance that are facing immediate challenges.