

7. Geo-fencing App to locate Quarantine Violators

Prelims Syllabus: Scientific Exploration

Mains Syllabus: GS-II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in News?

- The government has tested an application that triggers e-mails and SMS alerts to an authorised government agency if a person has jumped quarantine or escaped from isolation, based on the person's mobile phone's cell tower location.

What is Geo-fencing?

- Geo-fencing is a location-based service in which an app or other software uses GPS, RFID, Wi-Fi or cellular data to trigger a pre-programmed action when a mobile device or RFID tag enters or exits a virtual boundary set up around a geographical location.

About the News:

- The Centre is using powers under the Indian Telegraph Act to “fetch information” from telecom companies every 15 minutes to track COVID-19 cases across the country.
- The government has tested an application that triggers e-mails and SMS alerts to an authorised government agency if a person has jumped quarantine or escaped from isolation, based on the person's mobile phone's cell tower location. The “geo-fencing” is accurate by up to 300 m.
- The location information is received periodically over a secure network for the authorised cases with “due protection of the data received”.
- The States have been asked to seek the approval of their Home Secretaries under the provisions of **Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**, for the specified mobile phone numbers to request the DoT to provide information by email or SMS in case of violation of “geo-fencing”.

Why Geo-fencing Needed?

- One of the biggest challenges that India faces in its fight against Coronavirus in the country is about tracking the potential carriers to curb the spread of this highly infectious disease.
- To address this challenge, centre has come up with an application, which can be used to identify and isolate the potential carriers, who are Currently Asymptomatic.

How does App work?

- The mobile application works via geo-fencing feature. The application would allow government authorities to 'register the asymptomatic carriers and track them to effectively monitor their movement.
- The movement of potential carriers would be monitored and tracked using geo-fencing feature.
- In case the potential carrier tried to break the fence setup for them, the app would trigger an alert to the authorities, which can then track down the suspects and curb the spread of COVID-19.

