

30 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Dam Safety Bill runs into Opposition criticism

Context:

- Opposition MPs in the Lok Sabha have expressed deep reservations about the Centre's decision to introduce the Dam Safety Bill, 2019.
- It is asserted that the legislation, which is ostensibly aimed at providing uniform safety measures across the country, would undermine the powers of State governments since **water is a State subject**.

Details:

- The Dam Safety Bill, aimed at developing uniform safety procedures for all dams across the country, has been introduced in the Lok Sabha for the third time.
- It was first introduced in Parliament in August 2010 and was referred to a standing committee, which submitted its report in June 2011.
- After this, attempts to pass the Bill in the 15th and 16th Lok Sabhas failed due to opposition from the States.

What does the Bill say?

- The Bill provides for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of dams to prevent disasters, and institutional mechanisms to ensure safety.
- It is applicable to all dams across the country which are over 10 metres in height, subject to specific design and structural conditions.
- The Bill enables the setting up of a National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS) to formulate policies and regulations regarding dam safety standards and to analyse causes of major dam failures to suggest changes in safety practices.
- To implement these policies, a National Dam Safety Authority will be set up.
- At the State level, the Bill provides for the constitution of a State Dam Safety Organisation to take care of its dams, and a State Committee on Dam Safety to review its work, among other things.

Why are the States against it?

- The Bill previously failed to be passed in Lok Sabha due to opposition from numerous States.
- Their objections to the Bill are two-fold, one of which is that since 'water' comes under the State list, it is an unconstitutional move aimed at taking control of their dams.
- Tamil Nadu, one of the strongest critics of the Bill through the years, opposes it because under its provisions, access and information on four of its dams, including the conflict-ridden Mullaiperiyar, would have to be shared with Kerala, where they are located.
- Many States, including Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha, have opposed the Bill because they say it encroaches upon the sovereignty of States to manage their dams, and violates the principles of federalism enshrined in the Constitution.
- They see it as an attempt by the Centre to consolidate power in the guise of safety concerns.
- Kerala MP also pointed out a conflict of interest in the Bill — the provision to have a representative of the Central Water Commission as a member of the NCDS (a regulatory body) would mean that CWC will function as both an advisor and regulator, which is impermissible under the Constitution according to the Supreme Court.
- Tamil Nadu's main concern stems from Section 23(1) of the Bill, according to which if the dams of one State fall under the territories of another, then the National Dam Safety Authority will perform the role of State Dam Safety Organisation, thus eliminating potential causes for inter-State conflicts.
- This clause is particularly worrisome for the State which has four dams — the Mullaiperiyar, Parambikulam, Thunakkadavu and Peruvuripallam — that are owned by it, but are situated in neighbouring Kerala.
- Currently, the rights on these dams are governed by pre-existing long-term agreements among the States.
- The provisions in the Bill implies that the dam-owning State would not have rights over the safety and maintenance of the dam located in another State.

Why is the Union government introducing the Bill now?

- There are 5,344 large dams in India, of which around 293 are more than 100 years old and 1,041 are 50 to 100 years old.

- Nearly 92% of these dams are on inter-State rivers, and accidents at many of them have spurred concerns as to the frequency and efficiency of their maintenance, and Article 246 and 56 empowers the Centre to intervene.
 - For instance, on July 3, 2019, 23 people were feared dead after the Tiware dam in Ratnagiri in Maharashtra's Konkan region breached.
 - Local elected representatives said that government had neglected their pleas for repair of the dam, built 14 years ago, even though they had complained that cracks had been spotted in the structure.
 - A jurisdiction issue regarding which tehsil the Tiware dam falls in led to both Chiplun and Dapoli tehsil offices ignoring the villagers' petition.
- Issues like this have added fuel to the government's argument for the establishment of a national authority to tackle the lack of legal and institutional safeguards in the country.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. India has nearly 3,000 tigers, up by a third from 2014 count

Context:

The National Tiger Estimation (Tiger census), made public shows that India has 2,967 tigers, a third more than in 2014.

Findings of the report:

- Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number of tigers at 526.
- Karnataka came second with 524 tigers, followed by Uttarakhand with 442 tigers.
- While all the States saw a "positive" increase, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram saw a decline in tiger population.
- The count has decreased drastically from 46 to 19 in Chhattisgarh.
- In Odisha, it has been on a continual decline over the years and now stands at 28.
- No tigers were found in Buxa (West Bengal), Dampa (Mizoram) and Palamau (Jharkhand), reserves that had very low numbers in earlier assessments.
- While Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of tigers, Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu registered the maximum improvement since 2014.
- Pench is well managed because it has a season-wise biodiversity plan as well as flying squads and tactical patrolling for managing security.

The big cat count

The table shows the tiger population in India since the first tiger census in 2006. The Central India and Eastern Ghats landscape has seen the highest increase in tiger population since the 2014 cycle

Landscape	2006	2010	2014	2018
Shivalik Hills and Gangetic Plains	297	353	485	646
Central India and Eastern Ghats	601	601	688	1,033
Western Ghats	402	534	776	981
North East Hills and Brahmaputra	100	148	201	219
Sundarbans	NA	70	76	88

3.81 lakh sq. km. — Forests surveyed for tiger signs
5.23 lakh km — Foot surveys
5.94 lakh — Man-days effort
76,651 Photographs of tigers

While tiger occupancy has increased in Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, it has seen a sharp decline in Chhattisgarh since 2014 and has stagnated for Odisha



A white tiger at Alipore Zoo in Kolkata • ASHOK BHAUMIK

About the exercise:

- Since 2006, the Wildlife Institute of India — an Environment Ministry-funded body — has been tasked with coordinating the exercise.
- This is the fourth survey being conducted since 2006.
- The gargantuan exercise is conducted once in four years.
- The tiger bearing habitats were divided into five landscape regions—Shivalik-Gangetic plains, Central India and the Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, North Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains and the Sundarbans.

Details:

- In 2006, India had only 1,411 tigers. This rose to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014 on the back of improved conservation measures and new estimation methods.
- The government also commissioned a study to gauge the economic value of tiger reserves.
 - Based on an analysis of 10 tiger reserves, the government claimed that the cumulative benefits — from the carbon and timber conserved, livelihood to those who depend on forest and tourism — were anywhere from Rs. 4,200 crore to Rs.16,000 crore annually.
- India accounts for many of the 3,500-odd tigers that are scattered among Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russian Federation, Thailand and Vietnam.
- In 2010, these countries agreed to put in efforts to double the tiger population in sum by 2022 as part of the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) programme Tx2.

Conclusion:

A number of government initiatives to streamline tiger conservation - including a ban on hunting and awareness drives in villages -are said to be behind the increase of the population. A strict wildlife protection law implemented in 1972 made it virtually illegal to kill or capture wild animals even when "problem animals" were involved in severe conflict situations. Under pressure from global conservationists, India also

upped investments to hire more forest guards and improve protection of reserves.

India is now estimated to be home to around 70% of the world's tigers. India has achieved a historic milestone. Nine years ago it was decided in St. Petersburg that the target of doubling the tiger population would be 2022, India has completed the target 4 years earlier.

Category: ECONOMY

1. It's official, Odisha is origin of Rasagola

Context:

The rasagola, a popular dessert of Odisha, has received the geographical indication tag from the Registrar of Geographical Indication after years of controversy around the sweet.

What was the controversy?

- Both Odisha and West Bengal have been contesting the origin of the rasagola.
- In November 2017, West Bengal was granted the GI tag for its own 'Banglara Rasgulla' which led people to erroneously believe that the GI Registry recognised Bengal as its place of origin, which is factually incorrect.
- Bengalis claim that the Rasgulla was invented in the 19th century by Nobin Chandra Das at his Bagbazar residence in Kolkata, while Odias believe that the tradition of Niladri Bije where Rasgulla is offered started in the 12th century.
- In 2015, the Odisha government had formed three committees to identify the origin of the Rasgulla and study its background
- Historical records submitted say the 'Odisha Rasagola' is associated with world famous Puri Jagannath Temple.
- The GI tag for Bengal and Odisha Rasagullas recognise two distinct versions of the sweet.

Details:

- The Odisha government had filed for geographical recognition of the 'Odishara Rasagulla' with the GI Registry in Chennai last year.
 - According to the application submitted to the Registrar of GI, 'Odisha Rasagola' is a sweet from the state of Odisha made of chhena (cottage cheese) cooked in sugar syrup, which is very soft to feel, is juicy and non-chewy in consistency and can be swallowed without teeth pressure.
 - Colour development of the 'Odisha Rasagola' is very specific, where without addition of external colour, various intensely-coloured rasagolas are prepared using the principle of caramelisation of sugar with specific methods of preparation, the application said.
 - The area of production of Odisha Rasagola has been shown all 30 districts.
- The sweet has been registered under GI of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2019 as 'Odisha Rasagola'.
- The GI number 612 has been registered in favour of the Odisha Small Industries Corporation Limited (OSIC Limited), a government of Odisha undertaking and Utkal Mistanna Byabasayee Samiti, a traders' organisation, in the foodstuff category.
- The first Odia product to receive a GI tag was Kandhamal Haldi, a type of turmeric produced by tribal farmers in the state's Kandhamal district.

What is Geographical Indication Tag?

- A geographical indication (GI) is symbol used on products that have a particular geographical origin and own qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must recognize an item as starting in a given place. A geographical indication right empowers those who have the right to use the sign to prohibit its use by a third party whose product does not imitate to the applicable standards.
- Geographical Indications are covered as a component of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- At the International level, GI is governed by World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, Geographical Indications registration is administered by the Geographical Indications of goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 which came into force with effect from September 2003. The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was Darjeeling tea in the year 2004-05.

Know more about [Geographical Indication](#)

Significance of Geographical Indication:

- The purpose of a geographical indication may act as admittance that the product possesses certain attributes, is made according to traditional methods, or enjoys a certain prominence due to its geographical origin.
- However, it must be noted that a protected geographical indication does not permit the holder to forbid someone from making a product using the same approaches as those set out in the standards for that indication.

2. RS clears changes to Insolvency Code

Context:

The Rajya Sabha passed an amended version of the three-year-old Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

Details:

- The amendments seek to end ambiguity and streamline the resolution process further.
- The Bill seeks to amend seven sections of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- It also gives homebuyers the status of a creditor giving them a say in the resolution in case a housing project goes bust.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016:

- The Code provides a time-bound process for resolving insolvency in companies and among individuals.
 - Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.

Read more about : [Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code \(IBC\) 2016](#)

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) amendment bill, 2019:

- **Resolution plan:** The Code provides that the resolution plan must ensure that the operational creditors receive an amount which should not be lesser than the amount they would receive in case of liquidation.
 - The Bill amends this to provide that the amounts to be paid to the operational creditor should be the higher of: (i) amounts receivable under liquidation, and (ii) the amount receivable

under a resolution plan, if such amounts were distributed under the same order of priority (as for liquidation). For example, if the default were for Rs 2,000 crore and the resolution professional recovered Rs 1600 crore, the operational creditor must at least get an amount which they would have received if Rs 1600 crore have been obtained through liquidation proceeds.

- Further, the Bill states that this provision would also apply to insolvency processes: (i) that have not been approved or rejected by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), (ii) that have been appealed to the National Company Appellate Tribunal or Supreme Court, and (iii) where legal proceedings have been initiated in any court against the decision of the NCLT.
- **Initiation of resolution process:** As per the Code, the NCLT must determine the existence of default within 14 days of receiving a resolution application. Based on its finding, NCLT may accept or reject the application.
 - The Bill states that in case the NCLT does not find the existence of default and has not passed an order within 14 days, it must record its reasons in writing.
- **Time-limit for resolution process:** The Code states that the insolvency resolution process must be completed within 180 days, extendable by a period of up to 90 days.
 - The Bill adds that the resolution process must be completed within 330 days. This includes time for any extension granted and the time taken in legal proceedings in relation to the process.
 - On the enactment of the Bill, if any case is pending for over 330 days, the Bill states it must be resolved within 90 days.
- **Representative of financial creditors:** The Code specifies that, in certain cases, such as when the debt is owed to a class of creditors beyond a specified number, the financial creditors will be represented on the committee of creditors by an authorised representative. These representatives will vote on behalf of the financial creditors as per instructions received from them.
 - The Bill states that such representative will vote on the basis of the decision taken by a majority of the voting share of the creditors that they represent.
- **Indemnity to successful bidders under IBC:** Under the code, loan defaulting companies are auctioned and the successful bidder, called resolution applicant, takes over such firms after paying an amount they had bid for.
 - As per the amendments, the government would not initiate any criminal proceedings against those who buy out a bankrupt company and no tax claim would be raised against them after implementation of a resolution plan.
 - The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019 makes it binding on the government that it will not raise any further claim after resolution plan is approved.
 - However, criminal matters would continue to be pursued against individuals of the loan-defaulting companies.

3. Bill against ponzi schemes gets RS nod

Context:

Rajya Sabha has passed the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019, which seeks to put in place a mechanism by which poor depositors will get back their hard-earned money.

Details:

- The Lok Sabha had passed the bill on July 24, 2019.
- The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019 replaced the ordinance on the same.
- Currently, nine regulators oversee and regulate various deposit-taking schemes. These include: (i) the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), (ii) the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), (iii) the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and (iv) state and union territory governments.
 - RBI regulates deposits accepted by non-banking financial companies

- SEBI regulates mutual funds
- State and union territory governments regulate chit funds, among others.
- All deposit-taking schemes are required to be registered with the relevant regulator.
- The recommendations include a new central law to tackle unregulated deposit schemes.

Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2019:

- **Unregulated deposit scheme:** The Bill bans unregulated deposit schemes. A deposit-taking scheme is defined as unregulated if it is taken for a business purpose and is not registered with the regulators listed in the Bill.
- **Deposit taker:** The Bill defines deposit takers as an individual, a group of individuals, or a company who asks for (solicits), or receives deposits. Banks and entities incorporated under any other law are not included as deposit takers.
- **Competent Authority:** The Bill provides for the appointment of one or more government officers, not below the rank of Secretary to the state or central government, as the Competent Authority. The Competent Authority will have powers similar to those vested in a civil court.
- **Designated Courts:** The Bill provides for the constitution of one or more Designated Courts in specified areas. This Court will be headed by a judge not below the rank of a district and sessions judge, or additional district and sessions judge.
- **Central database:** The Bill provides for the central government to designate an authority to create an online central database for information on deposit takers. All deposit takers will be required to inform the database authority about their business. The Competent Authority will be required to share all information on unregulated deposits with the authority.
- **Offences and penalties:** The Bill defines three types of offences, and penalties related to them. These offences are: (i) running (advertising, promoting, operating or accepting money for) unregulated deposit schemes, (ii) fraudulently defaulting on regulated deposit schemes, and (iii) wrongfully inducing depositors to invest in unregulated deposit schemes by willingly falsifying facts. Further, repeated offenders under the Bill will be punishable with imprisonment between five to 10 years, along with a fine ranging from Rs 10 lakh to five crore rupees.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. A straightforward lesson on resolution – On Kashmir Conflict

The editorial suggests why India and Pakistan should peacefully settle the Kashmir issue through bilateral dialogue.

Background:

- Recently, Donald Trump offered to be the "mediator" between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, claiming that PM Narendra Modi had sought his help in the matter. Mr. Trump made the statement during Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the United States.
- However, India's External Affairs Minister denied Trump's claims and made it clear that no such request has been made by the Prime Minister of India. It was also added that
 - Any engagement with Pakistan would require an end to cross border terrorism.

- The Shimla Agreement & the Lahore Declaration provide the basis to resolve all issues between India & Pakistan bilaterally.

Why is third party mediation not a good idea?

- Indian establishment's traditional logic, third party mediation in Jammu and Kashmir might not be a useful idea simply because third parties typically come with their own agenda.
- It might do more harm than good in an age of hypernationalism and frenzied media attention on anything to do with Kashmir.
- In a context where bilateral diplomacy on Jammu and Kashmir itself comes under intense scrutiny from domestic political forces, third party mediation is almost impossible to even consider. More so, past instances of third party mediation have had mixed results.

India's distaste for third part mediation:

- Much of the overt third party intervention in Kashmir ended with the Simla agreement of 1972 which stated, at New Delhi's insistence, that Kashmir will be a bilateral issue thereby ending the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan's (UNMOGIP's) peacekeeping work in Kashmir, de facto, if not de jure.
- The current UNMOGIP involvement in Kashmir is neither encouraged nor recognised by India, something Pakistan continues to do.
- New Delhi believes that its UN experience vis-à-vis Kashmir has been an unpleasant one.
- Then there is India's status-linked indifference to external opinion that comes with being a major economy and military power whose deep pockets and growing markets are of significance to those potentially desirous of talking about Kashmir.

Crisis management v/s Conflict Resolution:

- India has consistently, and successfully, blocked all third party mediation in Kashmir, except when it wants to let others play a role. And if anyone indeed makes a reference to Kashmir which New Delhi disagrees with, it either ignores it or strongly disapproves of it.
- That is, in practice, there has historically been a great deal of third party attention on the larger Kashmir question some of which has been encouraged by India (Only for Crisis Management i.e, mediation during an ongoing crisis and **NOT** conflict resolution that seeks to resolve the political or root causes of a conflict.
 - Kargil and post-Pulwama military stand-off are examples when India accepted third party mediation
 - While both these events were directly linked to Kashmir, mediation by the third party did not seek to address anything beyond the immediate diffusion of tensions.
 - Then there are other instances where third party crisis mediation took place even though they had no direct links to Kashmir such as the post-26/11 terror attacks.

Issues in seeking third party intervention for Crisis management:

- The issue in such situation is that even when the focus is on crisis management, the larger conflict, which has given rise to the crisis comes into focus and become part of the conversations between the mediator and the conflicting parties.
- It is not easy to separate the two either during a crisis or when the conflict is crisis prone. This is precisely what seems to underlie the current American interest in Kashmir.
- More so, while New Delhi's dislike to having third party discussions on Kashmir, especially on the human rights situation, it actively seeks third party attention on terror emanating from Pakistan as well as the latter's sponsorship of violence in the Valley.
- While this might be a desirable distinction to New Delhi's mind, it is not easy to get a third party to

focus on one part of the problem and ignore the other Delhi's efforts at getting other countries to condemn Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in Kashmir while at the same time disparaging the reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the human rights situation in Kashmir is a difficult balance to maintain.

Impact of regional geopolitics:

- The unfolding developments in regional geopolitics could also have implications for third party interest in Kashmir.
- The U.S.'s desire for a deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan, in which Pakistan is key, is already beginning to have an impact on the frosty relationship between Washington and Islamabad.
- Besides Washington, Beijing, and Moscow, the European capitals will also eventually start courting Pakistan.
- This will invariably increase, albeit marginally, the global focus on Kashmir either at Pakistan's insistence or because third parties might see a link between Kashmir and regional instability.
- As a matter of fact, several people have in the past made a direct link between instability in Afghanistan and the Kashmir conflict. Such voices could potentially become sharper.
- More so, if the rising concerns about the Islamic State's influence in Kashmir turn about to be not-so-misplaced, the heat on Kashmir is only going to increase.

Need for India-Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir Issue bilaterally:

- What further ensures third party involvement in Kashmir is the lack of a conflict resolution process between India and Pakistan.
- The less the two sides talk on Kashmir, the more there is are likely to be crisis situations between them which would invariably lead to more third party involvement in the whole Kashmir's complex situation.
- By not resolving conflicts between themselves, India and Pakistan are effectively outsourcing crisis management, and thereby conflict resolution, albeit in a limited manner, to third parties.

2. Talks and terror: on Afghan peace talks

Context: An attack on Afghan vice presidential candidate Amrullah Saleh's office in Kabul killed at least 20 people and injured 50, including Mr. Saleh.

Background:

- Saleh, a former intelligence chief is a strong critic of the Taliban and Pakistan.
- He is also President Ashraf Ghani's running-mate for the September 28 election.

Concerns raised by the attack:

- It is a threat to the peaceful conduct of the upcoming election.
- It disturbs the anticipation for a prolonged term of peace.
- It gives a message that even the top politicians are not safe in the country.

Presence of Insurgents in Afghanistan:

- Taliban controls half the country either directly or indirectly. It has expanded its reach to the hinterland, but not the urban centres.
- Insurgents continue to attack both military and civilian locations.
- The Islamic State has established a presence in the eastern parts of the country and is targeting

religious minorities.

Weakness of the Afghanistan Government:

- The government is notorious for chronic corruption.
- It has failed to ensure basic safety and security of civilians.
- Public's confidence in the system is eroding.
- Its security agencies are strained by the prolonged

Taliban's shifting positions:

- In recent months the U.S. and Taliban representatives have held multiple rounds of talks in Doha, Qatar.
- But the insurgents continue offensive irrespective of the peace process.
- The Taliban appears to be trying to boost its bargaining position in the talks with the U.S.

Mistakes done by the U.S.A?

- The Kabul government has a record of failure in terms of preventing attacks.
- The decision by the U.S. to delink the negotiations from the daily violence is giving the insurgents a free run.
- The decision to keep the Afghan government out of the peace process was a big compromise.
- Afghans continue to suffer even when the U.S.A and the Taliban talk.

What is the way ahead?

- Afghanistan needs a political settlement.
- A ceasefire must be established with immediate effect.
- The U.S. needs to rethink its position giving too much leeway to the Taliban in its quest to get out of its longest war.
- There has to be more pressure, both political and military, on the Taliban to cease the violence.
- The U.S. should help the Afghan government in preventing attacks.
- The upcoming elections must be held in an atmosphere of peace.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. In Assam, basic dignity at stake

Context:

- The Supreme Court has extended the day of reckoning for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam by a month.
 - The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register of Indian citizens.
 - The purpose of the NRC update (happening only for Assam) is to identify illegal immigrants in Assam, many of whom migrated to Assam from Bangladesh during the 1971 war with Pakistan.
- It gives a month's relief or another opportunity to those who are off the list to scramble and get into it.
- Thus, it has provided an equal time frame for those who say that many on the list shouldn't be there because they are not actually 'foreigners'.

Issues:

- With this extension, the Court rejected demands by both the Central and State governments which, concerned about the nationwide controversy about the drive, had said they wanted to re-verify 10% to 20% of those on the list.
- In making such a request, the governments were expressing a degree of anxiety about the data quality of a process for which they themselves have pressed strongly since 2014.
- The Court's decision was based on a declaration by the State Coordinator of the NRC, the officer whom it has mandated to run the NRC, that such a review was not necessary: his team had already re-verified 27% of the list.
 - The concern here is that many Hindu Bengalis will be left out of the NRC and hence also get disenfranchised in the process.
 - This has happened numerous times in the ongoing exercise as also with members of traditional tribal groups in the State.

Details:

- The goal of the gargantuan effort of the NRC appears simple: identify Indians living in Assam and by exclusion pick out the 'foreigners' or Bangladeshis
- The efforts are to resolve the issue of illegal immigration from neighbouring Bangladesh into the region over decades. But each stage and layer appear to underline how challenging the problems remain, with issues of legal redress being acute.
- 40 lakh people were left out of the NRC when the draft list was published last July.
- This led to an outcry by civil society groups, and media accounts showed how citizens had been left out, reportedly on religious and ethnic grounds, and due to bad data collection.
- In the past months, not less than 36 lakh or 3.6 million counter claims seeking inclusion were filed. (90% of those who were left out).
- In the last storm of data-driven efforts, the Supreme Court allowed not less than two lakh complaints against people alleged to be "foreigners" by others whose identity was kept secret.
- Unknown entities tossed vague charges against people who had lived in India for generations.

The plight of the stateless:

- Concerns in Assam have been high over the purported influx post-1971 after the creation of Bangladesh.
- Yet the question that is what happens to those individuals (and their dependents) who are deemed stateless after they find themselves off the list.
- What would be their plight if Bangladesh refuses to take them, saying they are not its nationals, as it has consistently held for decades.
- Many of those who are off the list are poor, cannot afford lawyers and may not even know of their right to legal aid. At stake is the basic dignity of the weak, voiceless and vulnerable.
- The recent remarks of a senior BJP leader from Assam outlines a process which the government believes can help resolve the situation.
 - The BJP leader underlined his non-acceptance of the Assam Accord, which has been the medium for the issue of alleged migrants, and which enabled the conferring of citizenship on a distinct group of people after a cooling off period of 10 years.
 - About 75,000 persons who benefited from this process had migrated from then East Pakistan between 1966 and 1971; most of them were Hindus. The BJP leader said that such a cooling off period was unacceptable, that "there should be push back" but "push back with dignity".
 - Until such expulsion, alleged foreigners must have access to rights that will enable their survival. These would include the right to education and health. But it would exclude the right to vote or to acquire property so that they did not have a role in political processes.

F. Tidbits

1. Generic section in drug stores soon

- The All-Kerala Chemists and Druggists Association (AKCDA), has come up with this proposal to tackle the rising demand for non-branded medicines at affordable rates.
- AKCDA the largest network of medicine distributors in the State.
- While the Union government has been pushing the sale of generic medicines through Jan Aushadhi stores. The State government has been promoting the Kerala generics brand of medicines through Karunya community pharma outlets as well.
- As many as 2,000 of the 13,000 AKCDA members are expected to have generic sections at their stores within six months.
- However, there are concerns about generic medicines.
 - The medical community, however, is not very enthusiastic, as they are apprehensive of the quality aspect.
 - It is opined that almost 98% of generic drugs in the country is of low quality.

2. All schools, colleges in Mizoram to have nutrition gardens

- The Deputy Commissioner of Lawngtlai, and her team designed a remedy for shortage of quality fruits and vegetables in the district, called: Kan Sikul, Kan Huan. In the Mizo language, it means 'My School, My Farm'.
- This year, Rs. 66 lakh has been approved for developing 1,320 kitchen gardens at the rate of Rs.5,000 per school.
- Lawngtlai is Mizoram's most backward and disaster-prone district.
- There is a shortage of quality fruits and vegetables with the deficiencies in the district's children belonging mostly to the Chakma and Lai ethnic minorities.
- Vegetables and fruits available in Lawngtlai town are costly.
- This is how the idea of involving school children, their parents and teachers to create a nutrition garden in each school developed.
- The aim is to make every school, Anganwadi, child care institution and hostel in Lawngtlai self-sufficient in the local variety of fruits and vegetables by March 2020. And also reduce malnutrition and stuntedness among children.
- The strategy is blending the Centre's Poshan Abhiyan with regular activities of departments such as Agriculture and Horticulture.
- Apart from the State government's farming experts, village heads and parents have also been asked to ensure the nutrition gardens function and the benefits are shared among the children.
- The role of the midday meal coordinator is to ensure that the children eat the produce from their respective gardens as far as possible.
- The programme does not involve expenses beyond providing the seeds of certain varieties of fruits and vegetables.
- The children are being taught manuring and making their own compost pit and the local people are providing water and other logistical help.

3. T.N. to grant special leave for cancer treatment

- In a special gesture, the Tamil Nadu government has decided to grant 10 days' special casual leave to employees undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy for cancer.
- The privilege would be extended every time the government servant goes for treatment.
- An order has been issued by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms granting the special casual leave for cancer patients over and above the other leave that they are entitled to as per existing rules.

- Government employees are also covered under a health insurance scheme that covers treatment for cancer and the insured can opt for treatment in network hospitals.
- The decision is in order to change the perception that cancer means death.
- In October last year, the State government classified certain diseases — chicken pox, measles, swine flu, plague and rabies — as infectious and allowed affected employees to take special casual leave ranging from seven to 10 days.

4. About 50 health facilities get closure notice

- The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has issued closure directions to at least 50 healthcare facilities in the city for failing to register with them under the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- The establishments which include, nursing homes, dental clinics, and blood collection centres, have also been imposed fines ranging from Rs.2-Rs.14 lakh each and orders have been issued to cut their power supply.
- In the first week of June, the DPCC had asked all such facilities to register with them by June 15 and subsequently carried out inspections.
- The action follows National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders to regulate such facilities.
- Earlier this month, the NGT had directed all States to furnish a report on the generation of biomedical waste within two months.
- The NGT had also said that in case of non-compliance, a cost of Rs.1 crore per month will be imposed on each State.
- The fine has been imposed based on the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) guidelines depending on the nature of the establishment and the period for which it has been operating, among others factors.
- The facilities which have been issued closure notices will have to pay the fine and then apply for registration and complete the procedure to start functioning again.

G. Prelims Facts

1. The Trade Record Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce (TRAFFIC)

- TRAFFIC is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- It was founded in 1976 as a strategic alliance of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Their mission is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.
- It states that through research, analysis, guidance and influence, it promotes sustainable wildlife trade (the green stream work) and combats wildlife crime and trafficking (the red stream work).

2. Amphibious ship LCU L-56 joins Navy

- Indian Navy Ship LCU L-56, has been commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- It is the sixth of the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) MK IV class ships.
- LCU 56 is an amphibious ship with its primary role being transportation and deployment of main battle tanks, armoured vehicles, troops and equipment from ship to shore.
- The ship is equipped with the state-of-art equipment and is armed with two 30 mm CRN-91 guns manufactured by Ordnance Factor.
- The induction of LCU 56 will add to maritime and HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) capability of ANC (Andaman Nicobar Command).
- The ship will be deployed for multi-role activities such as beaching operations, search and rescue

missions, disaster relief operations, coastal patrol, and surveillance operations along the Andaman and Nicobar Group of Islands.

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Kandhamal Haldi, a type of turmeric produced by tribal farmers of Odisha.
2. It is the first product in India to receive a GI tag.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 2 only
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Explanation:

The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was Darjeeling tea in the year 2004-05. The first Odia product to receive a GI tag was Kandhamal Haldi, a type of turmeric produced by tribal farmers in the state's Kandhamal district.

Q2. Which of the following are not matched correctly?

- a. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve: Tamil Nadu
- b. Kaziranga National Park (KNP): Assam
- c. Periyar Tiger Reserve: Kerala
- d. Pench Tiger Reserve: Uttar Pradesh

Answer: d

Explanation:

Pench Tiger Reserve is located in Madhya Pradesh.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. The craft forms of Warangal Dhurries and Adilabad Dhokra have a Geographical Indication Tag (GI Tag).
2. Both the craft forms are from the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Which of the statement/s given is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Explanation:

The craft forms of Warangal Dhurries and Adilabad Dhokra from Telangana are awarded a Geographical Indication Tag (GI Tag) by the Geographical Indication Registry based in Chennai. Warangal Dhurries is a famous variety of traditional rug made out of cotton and Adilabad Dhokra is an ancient bell metal craft.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Trade Record Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce is a Non-Governmental Organisation.
2. It was founded as a strategic alliance of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
3. Its mission is to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature.

Which of the statement/s given is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Explanation:

All the statements are correct.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. While India may have achieved its target under the Global Tiger Recovery Program, launched with the aim of doubling the global tiger population by 2022, a few years ahead of schedule, the fast reducing forest cover still presents a threat to the tigers. Examine the statement and suggest the way ahead. (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. Despite the rising mob violence, the political class and bureaucracy have continued to remain a silent spectator. It is high time a legislation to tackle the issue of Mob Lynching is brought about. Comment. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

