

22 Dec 2019: Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

GEOGRAPHY

1. [‘Monsoon decided history of Indian subcontinent’](#)

SOCIAL ISSUES

1. [Manual scavenging left 282 dead since 2016](#)

B. GS 2 Related

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India, China to seek fair border solution](#)
2. [ICC to probe ‘war crimes’ in Palestinian territories since 2014](#)

C. GS 3 Related

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. [Carbon dots help detect herbicide pollution](#)

ECONOMY

1. [No possibility of any change in GST slabs, rates](#)
2. [Can’t cut deposit rates beyond threshold: SBI](#)

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

1. [Rajasthan bags four prizes for job guarantee scheme](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1. [Tata-Mistry ruling](#)

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [What connects the NPR, NRIC and Census?](#)

F. Tidbits

1. [Ramanujan’s legacy used in signal processing, black hole physics](#)

G. Prelims Facts

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Category:GEOGRAPHY

1. ‘Monsoon decided history of Indian subcontinent’

Context:

A recent study by researchers at Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur on the history of the Indian summer monsoon.

Details:

- The study has revealed that **abrupt changes in the Indian monsoon in the last 900 years decided the course of human history in the subcontinent.** The paper titled “Abrupt changes in Indian summer monsoon strength during the last 900 years and their linkages to socio-economic conditions in the

Indian subcontinent” highlights that **decline of Indian dynasties was linked to weak monsoon and reduced food production.**

- The paper **highlights three phases in the 900-year stretch** — Medieval Climate Anomaly from 950 CE to 1350 CE, Little Ice Age from 1350 CE to 1800 CE and Current Warm Period from 1800 CE till today. The paper highlights strong monsoon during Medieval Climate Anomaly and Current Warm Period and phases of weak and strong monsoon in Little Ice Age.
- Deficient rainfall led to the **collapse of the Mansabdari system, started by Mughal emperor Akbar, in the late 17th century.** Similarly, drought interspersed with violent monsoon rains sounded the death knell for the **Khmer empire of south-east Asia in the 15th century.**
- **Several dynasties, such as the Sena in Bengal, Solanki in Gujarat in the mid-13th century and Paramara and Yadav in the early to mid-14th century** – all of which flourished during abundant rainfall — declined during the dry phases of the Indian summer monsoon (ISM), suggesting a role of the climate in the socio-political crisis.

Methodology:

- For the study on long-term spatiotemporal variability of the ISM, researchers looked at **palaeoclimatic records** using oxygen isotope proxy record from **speleothems (a structure formed in a cave by deposition of minerals from water)** at the Wah Shikar cave in Meghalaya.

Significance:

There can be no doubting the profound impact of the abrupt shifts of rainfall on human history. This is all the more important in the current context given that humans are facing **the challenge of climate change.**

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Manual scavenging left 282 dead since 2016

Context:

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

Details:

- As many as **282 people have died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks in the country between 2016 and November 2019** according to the numbers available with the ministry.
- Among the States, Tamil Nadu has recorded 40 deaths, the highest in number, in these four years. This is followed by Haryana with 31 deaths and Gujarat and Delhi with 30 deaths each. Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have recorded 27 deaths each in the same period.
- These figures are on the basis of **FIRs filed by the respective State governments.** According to the data tabled in the Rajya Sabha, 50 deaths were reported in 2016, 83 in 2017, 66 in 2018 and 83 till November 2019.
- In the same response, the Central government has put on record that there are **about 60,440 manual scavengers identified across the country, in 17 States.** More than half of them, about **35,472, have been identified from Uttar Pradesh alone.**

Legal provisions:

- The Parliament had enacted **the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013** which came in force from December 6, 2013.
- **Sanitation being a State subject**, the people for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks are employed by local bodies.
- States and Union Territories have to ensure filing of FIRs and prosecution in all cases of employment of persons for hazardous cleaning of sewers as per the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013.

Concerns:

- Bezwada Wilson, national convener of Safai Karmachari Andolan, an organization working to eradicate manual scavenging believes that the **deaths are much higher than what is reported in the official statistics.**
- The activists say that every year hundreds of people die but nothing much has been done on the ground.
- The deaths have been higher in states like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh where there has been **rapid and unplanned urbanization.**

Way forward:

- **Reducing human intervention** in cleaning septic tanks and sewers is important to bring down human casualties to zero.
- There are **technologies available not only to detect the presence of poisonous gas in sewers and septic tanks but also for mechanized cleaning of it.** There is an urgent need to ensure these technologies are available with the state agencies.

B. GS 2 Related

Category:INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India, China to seek fair border solution

Context:

Completion of the 22nd round of the Sino-India boundary talks under the **framework of Special Representatives'** dialogue.

Background:

- The recent meeting was significant as it happened in the backdrop of China's criticism of India's August 5 decision to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the region into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.
- India had retorted by reiterating Delhi's claims over the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir by urging China to stop its activities in that region.
- The Indian and Chinese leaders last met at the **Mamallapuram informal summit** in October 2019.

Details:

- The 22nd round was led by India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi.
- The Special Representatives resolved to intensify their efforts to achieve a **fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution** to the India-China boundary question.
- The two sides would actively advance boundary negotiations in line with **the Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles** for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question.
- Officials resolved to respect each other's sensitivities for the sake of better ties.

Significance:

- Both sides agree that it is important to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas for the **"overall bilateral relationship"** to flourish.
- The two countries need to approach the question of boundary settlement from the **"strategic perspective of India-China relations"**. A solution to this **long pending but solvable** question holds immense significance given that it would **remove any impedance in taking the bilateral relations to the next level**. A flourishing bilateral relation between India and China would not only be in the interest of the two countries but also of the Asian region and the world at large.
- The two countries are planning 70 events to celebrate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2020.

For more on the issue of Indo-China border dispute: [Click Here](#)

2. ICC to probe 'war crimes' in Palestinian territories since 2014

Context:

International Criminal Court's probe into the alleged war crimes in Palestinian territories.

Details:

- The International Criminal Court through its chief prosecutor had launched a preliminary probe in January 2015 into allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Israel and the Palestinian territories, in the wake of the **2014 Gaza war**.
- The ICC's preliminary investigation has looked at the 2014 war which left 2,251 dead on the Palestinian side, the majority civilians, and 74 on the Israeli side, most of them soldiers. It has also looked at violence near the Israel-Gaza border in 2018.
- The International Criminal Court (ICC)'s chief prosecutor has now stated the intent to open a full investigation into alleged war crimes in the **Palestinian territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip**.
- A full ICC investigation could possibly lead to **charges against individuals. States cannot be charged by the ICC**.

Question of Jurisdiction:

- There are some doubts whether the court may exercise its jurisdiction over the territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. This is mainly because of the unique and **highly contested legal and factual issues** attached to the **larger question of the Israel-Palestine issue**.
- There is also the fact that **Palestine is a member of the ICC since 2015** and there had been a referral from the Palestinians to the ICC to probe the war crimes.

- Even though the question of **Palestine's statehood remains controversial** it **has joined numerous international organizations like the United Nations** (status of non-member observer state), **UNESCO and the ICC**.
- Although **Israel has not ratified the Rome Statute**, its military and civilian leaders could face charges if they are believed to have committed crimes on Palestinian territory.

Reactions:

Palestine:

- The Palestinians welcomed the move by the ICC as a “long overdue step” following a nearly five-year preliminary probe by the prosecutor into the situation since the 2014 war in Gaza.

Israel and the U.S.:

- This move of the ICC has been **condemned by Israel and the U.S.**
- **Both U.S. and Israel have refused to sign up to the court**, which was set up in 2002 to be the only global tribunal trying the world's worst crimes, war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Israel alleges that the International Criminal Court is being used as a political tool to delegitimize the State of Israel.
- The U.S. has repeatedly stated that since the Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state, they, therefore, are not qualified to obtain full membership or participate as a state in international organizations, entities, or conferences, including the ICC.
- The ICC has faced **a number of criticisms from states and civil society**, including objections about its jurisdiction, accusations of bias, questioning of the fairness of its case-selection and trial procedures, and doubts about its effectiveness.

Additional information:

The International Criminal Court:

- **The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal** that sits in **The Hague, Netherlands**.
- The ICC has jurisdiction to **prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression**.
- It is intended to **complement existing national judicial systems** and it may, therefore, exercise its jurisdiction only when certain conditions are met, such as when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals or when the United Nations Security Council or individual states refer situations to the Court.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court:

- The ICC began functioning on 1 July 2002, the date that the **Rome Statute** entered into force. **The Rome Statute is a multilateral treaty that serves as the ICC's foundational and governing document**.
- The states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court are those sovereign states that have ratified or have otherwise become a party to, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- The ICC can **prosecute only those individuals for war crimes who are nationals of states parties or who have committed the alleged crime in the territory of states parties**.
- **States parties are legally obligated to co-operate** with the Court when it requires, such as in arresting and transferring indicted persons or providing access to evidence and witnesses.

Indian stand:

- India is among the 41 nations which have **neither signed nor acceded to the Statute.**
- The government of India has consistently opposed the Court. It abstained in the vote adopting the statute in 1998, saying it objected to the broad definition adopted of crimes against humanity; the rights given to the UN Security Council to refer and delay investigations and bind non-states parties; and the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction not being explicitly criminalized.
- Other anxieties about the Court concern **how the principle of complementarity would be applied to the Indian criminal justice system**, the inclusion of war crimes for non-international conflicts, and the power of the Prosecutor to initiate prosecutions.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Carbon dots help detect herbicide pollution

Context:

Research at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology of Assam, on the usage of the commonly found invasive plant water hyacinth.

Background:

- **Water hyacinth is a free-floating perennial aquatic plant (or hydrophyte) native to tropical and sub-tropical South America.**
- With one plant capable of duplicating itself every nine days, the weed native to Brazil has spread rapidly to other parts of the world. India is currently infested by this weed.
- States like **Assam and Kerala** are highly affected by the Water Hyacinth. It is also referred to as the **Bengal terror** given its effect on the local ecology and lives of the people.
- It has an effect on irrigation, hydroelectric generation and navigation. It also leads to a drastic **reduction in fish production, aquatic crops and an increase in diseases caused by mosquitoes.**
- The struggle to control the water hyacinth is global. For years scientists concentrated their efforts on eradicating it. But the efforts to **convert this weed into a value-added product has been receiving increasing interest.**
- There have been previous attempts exploring if the plant's fibre can be used to make furniture.

Details:

- In an extraordinary waste-to-wealth feat, researchers from Assam have used the commonly found invasive plant water hyacinth to **produce carbon nanoparticles.**
- These extremely tiny (less than 10 nanometres) particles can be used for detecting a commonly used herbicide — pretilachlor. **The nanoparticles were found to be selective and sensitive for the detection of the herbicide.**

Methodology:

- The team harvested water hyacinth leaves, removed the chlorophyll, dried and powdered it.

- The sieved powder underwent several treatments including heating at 150 degree Celsius to convert it to carbon dots. **When a nanoparticle is less than 10 nanometre we call it a dot or nanodot.**
- The carbon dots were able to **give a green fluorescence under UV light.** The extremely small oxygen functional groups on the surface of the dot are responsible for the fluorescence.
- The fluorescence intensity increases in the presence of the herbicide ensuring that these carbon dots can be used in **detecting pretilachor in soil samples.**

Significance:

- This will be a **commercially viable option** when compared with the sensors currently available in the market, as the raw material for the construction of the sensor — **the water hyacinth** — is **readily available and is practically a waste material.**

Category: ECONOMY

1. No possibility of any change in GST slabs, rates

Context:

Statement by Sushil Kumar Modi, the Convenor of Group of Ministers on IGST.

Background:

- There has been a **shortfall in GST revenue collections against projections.** It crossed the ₹1 lakh crore-mark after a gap of three months in November with revenue **growing by 6%** to ₹1.03 lakh crore during the month. The collection was ₹95,380 crore in October.
- **The GST Act promises state enough compensation from the Centre to keep their annual revenue growth 14% for five years** despite any likely loss due to the implementation of the indirect tax regime.
- Most prevalent indirect taxes were subsumed by the new GST structure, which came into effect on July 1, 2017, and **states are eligible for the compensation till 2021-22.**
- With **States not being paid compensation for loss of revenue due to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) implementation since August 2019,** there have been suggestions that the Centre should raise the cess or the GST rates itself, if needed, to compensate the States.
- There has always been a call for **further simplifying and reducing the GST rates** on the other end.

Details:

- Ideally, when the **economy is in a slowdown, tax rate cuts are announced to boost consumption.** Increasing GST rates at a time when there is a **consumption slowdown** will only add to the problem.
- Given the fact that **GST revenues are low, it is not the right time to bring down the number of slabs under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) or decreasing the tax rates.**
- The GST council will have to adopt a wait and watch approach **until the GST revenue stabilizes.**

For more on this issue: [Click Here](#)

2. Can't cut deposit rates beyond threshold: SBI

Context:

Concerns regarding **the lack of monetary policy transmission in India** and the subsequent **Operation Twist of the Reserve Bank of India**.

Background:

- **Back-to-back Policy rate cuts of 135 basis points have been announced by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) between February-October 2019.** It was only in the recent report that the Monetary Policy Committee took an unexpected pause on rate cuts on concerns of rising inflation.
- The policy rate cuts by the Monetary Policy Committee were **unable to bring down the bank lending rates proportionately.**
- There are concerns that this mismatch would **impede the government's measures to revive the slowing economy.**

Details:

- The SBI chairman has defended the move of the banks stating that when the repo rate was going up 5-6 years ago, interest rates for borrowers did not increase in that proportion. In 2013, the repo rate was around 10%. Since 2013, Reserve Bank's repo and bank interest rates for consumers have been moving in a completely aligned manner.
- SBI Chairman has also stated that **banks cannot go beyond a threshold to bring down interest rates on deposits** due to the following reasons:
 - Banks cannot lend at lower rates to corporates as the **risk of default is too high.**
 - If the banks have to lend money at lower rates then they will also have to pay less to depositors. Banking system's dependence in India is largely on depositors. Today, **90% of the bank's deposit is the retail deposit.** To attract such depositors to retain their savings in bank accounts would entail a minimum rate of interest on their earnings given the still **high cost of banking in India.** A low **Rate of interest would only disincentivize small depositors.**
 - India **lacks social security schemes.** India has a substantial population of senior citizens and in the absence of social security schemes, **interest on deposits is a source of earning for the senior citizens.**
 - The banks facing the **problem of NPA** can ensure that they are able to provision some money from the higher rates to write off the NPA.
 - The banks cannot lower rates beyond a threshold also due to **asset-liability mismatch issues.**

Category: GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

1. Rajasthan bags four prizes for job guarantee scheme

Context:

- Rajasthan has bagged four prizes for its performance under the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.**

Details:

- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (later renamed as **the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act"**, MGNREGA), is Indian labour law and **social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'**. This act was passed in September 2005.
- The scheme comes under **the Union Ministry of Rural Development.**

Provisions of the act:

- The MGNREGA talks **about providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.**
- Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and **minimum wages are to be paid.** If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an **unemployment allowance.** Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a **legal entitlement.**
- MGNREGA is to be **implemented mainly by Gram Panchayats(GPs).** The involvement of contractors is banned. Labour-intensive tasks like creating infrastructure for water harvesting, drought relief and flood control are preferred.
- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) has **enshrined social audits in the Act.** A social audit is an accountability tool that measures, evaluates, identifies gaps in service delivery and elicits promises to rectify these gaps with the direct participation of intended beneficiaries in this process.
- The law provides many safeguards to promote effective management and implementation. The act explicitly mentions the principles and **agencies for implementation, list of allowed works, financing pattern, monitoring and evaluation,** and most importantly the detailed measures to ensure transparency and accountability.

Objectives:

- The MGNREGA was initiated with the objective of "**enhancing livelihood security in rural areas** by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work". Another aim of MGNREGA is to **create durable assets** (such as roads, canals, ponds and wells).
- Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, NREGA can help in protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.

Upholding the constitutional provisions:

- The Act aims to follow the Directive Principles of State Policy enunciated in Part IV of the Constitution of India. The law by providing a **'right to work' is consistent with Article 41 that directs the State to secure to all citizens the right to work.** The statute also seeks to protect the environment through rural works which is consistent with Article 48A that directs the State to protect the environment.
- In accordance with the **Article 21 of the Constitution of India that guarantees the right to life with dignity to every citizen of India,** this act imparts dignity to the rural people through an assurance of livelihood security.
- **Article 40 mandates the State to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority** as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. Conferring the primary responsibility of implementation on Gram Panchayats, the Act adheres to this constitutional principle.
- Also, the **process of decentralization initiated by 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India** that granted constitutional status to the Panchayats is further reinforced by the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA that endowed these rural self-government institutions with authority to implement the law.

For more on this topic: [Click Here](#)

E. Editorials

Category:CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1. Tata-Mistry ruling

Context:

- **The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** declared as “illegal” the October 2016 removal of Cyrus P. Mistry as Executive Chairman of Tata Sons Limited and ordered his reinstatement to the post.

Details:

- In a 172-page order, a two-member bench of the NCLAT, **set aside the judgment passed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**, Mumbai, on July 9, 2018, and ordered that “disparaging” and “unsubstantiated” remarks made by the NCLT against the appellants, Mr Mistry and others, be expunged.
- The appellate tribunal, however, suspended its order on Mr Mistry’s reinstatement as Executive Chairman of Tata Sons — in place of the incumbent, whose appointment was deemed illegal — for a period of four weeks “with a view to ensure smooth functioning of the company”.
- In response, Tata Sons has said it “strongly believes in the strength of its case and will take appropriate legal recourse”.

NCLAT:

- As part of a **comprehensive revamp of the adjudication of corporate law disputes**, the NCLAT was constituted with effect from June 1, 2016, for **hearing appeals against the orders of the NCLT, which, in turn, simultaneously replaced the erstwhile Company Law Board.**

Statutory status:

- Constituted under **Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013**, the appellate tribunal was conceived as the **dedicated appeals forum for resolving corporate law disputes and speeding up the resolution** by taking over the role hitherto played by overburdened High Courts in adjudicating such appeals.

Jurisdiction:

- Besides deciding on prayers against the NCLT’s rulings, including in matters relating to the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**, the NCLAT also serves as the appellate body for those aggrieved by **decisions made by the Competition Commission of India or orders passed by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India** under Sections 202 and 211 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

Composition:

- Established in New Delhi, the NCLAT initially comprised five members: two members each on the **judicial and technical sides** and the Chairperson Justice S.J. Mukhopadhaya.
- While a member (Judicial) of the NCLAT has to have been a judge of a High Court or a judicial member of the NCLT for five years, a technical member ought to possess proven ability and standing with domain knowledge and experience of not less than 25 years in areas such as law, industrial finance, industrial management, investment, accountancy, labour matters or corporate restructuring. **The chairperson must have been a judge of the Supreme Court of India or a Chief Justice of a High Court.**
- As part of its efforts to strengthen the entire NCLT and NCLAT apparatus with a view to further reducing pendency, the Centre this year added a total of four new members to the NCLAT — two each in judicial and technical capacities. **The government has also decided to set up a bench of the appellate tribunal at Chennai.**

Process of appeal:

- A party aggrieved by a ruling by any of the NCLT's numerous benches can file **an appeal against it within 45 days of receipt of a copy of the order, with a further 45 days allowed** if the NCLAT is satisfied that the appellant had sufficient cause that prevented the filing of the appeal within the stipulated period.
- The NCLAT's verdicts can, in turn, be challenged on a question of law in the Supreme Court, **within a 60-day window.**

Challenges:

- While the appellate body has adjudicated on several significant precedent-setting cases, some of its **recent decisions have faced intense judicial scrutiny** including one pertaining to **ArcelorMittal's bid to acquire debt-laden Essar Steel**.
 - The NCLAT ruling, in this case, was challenged in the Supreme Court, which **overturned a significant portion of the verdict.**
 - In its November 2019 judgment, the top court upheld the primacy of financial creditors over operational creditors in the repayments waterfall, settling the disquiet spurred by the NCLAT's decision to seemingly place secured financial creditors on a par with the operational creditors.
- In September 2019, **the Supreme Court had first stayed and then overturned a ruling by the NCLAT in an IBC case pertaining to Amtek Auto.** While the appellate tribunal had ordered the liquidation of the embattled auto parts maker, the court ordered that the resolution professional and lenders could invite fresh bids for the company.

For more information on the issue: [Click Here](#)

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. What connects the NPR, NRIC and Census?

Context:

West Bengal and Kerala move to suspend work related to the preparation and update of the National Population Register.

Background:

- In the backdrop of **protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019** and the **proposed National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC)**, West Bengal and Kerala suspended work related to the preparation and update of the National Population Register in their respective States.
- The NPR, **a register of residents of the country with demographic and biometric details**, was supposed to be prepared between April 2020 and September 2020 ahead of the Census slated for 2021. The present regime decided to update the **NPR originally created after the 2011 Census**. Preliminary work on the NPR has begun in several States.
- In Bengal, civil rights activists had been protesting against the compilation of the NPR alleging that it had nothing to do with the Census, but the “first step to initiate the National Register of Citizens” in the State.

National Population Register (NPR):

Objectives:

- **The NPR is a database containing a list of all usual residents of the country.** Its objective is to have a comprehensive identity database of people residing in the country. **A usual resident for the purposes of NPR is a person who has resided in a place for six months or more and intends to reside there for another six months or more.**
- **Better targeting and delivery of benefits and services** under the government was one of the early objectives of the NPR.

Process:

- NPR is generated through **house-to-house enumeration during the “house-listing” phase of the census**, which is held once in 10 years.
- **The census involves a detailed questionnaire** — there were 29 items to be filled up in the 2011 census — aimed at eliciting the particulars of every person, including age, sex, marital status, children, occupation, birthplace, mother tongue, religion, disability and whether they belonged to any Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe. On the other hand, **NPR collects basic demographic data and biometric particulars.**
- And, once the details are recorded in every local (village or ward), sub-district (tehsil or taluk), district and state level, there will be a **population register at each of these levels. Together, they constitute the National Population Register.**
- The last census was in 2011, and the next will be done in 2021. **The NPR is supposed to be prepared between April 2020 and September 2020 ahead of the Census slated for 2021.**

Legal basis for the NPR:

- While the **census is legally backed by the Census Act, 1948**, the NPR is a mechanism outlined in a set of rules framed under the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- **Section 14A was inserted in the Citizenship Act, 1955, in 2004**, providing for the compulsory registration of every citizen of India and the issue of a “national identity card” to him or her. It also said the **Central government may maintain a “National Register of Indian Citizens”.**
- **The Registrar General India shall act as the “National Registration Authority”** (and will function as the Registrar General of Citizen Registration). Incidentally, the Registrar General is also the country’s Census Commissioner.

The link between NPR and Aadhaar:

- During the early days of the NPR enrolment, under the United Progressive Alliance regime, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) scheme for issuance of Aadhaar numbers was also concurrently on.

- There was a conflict between **the Union Home Ministry, which administers the NPR**, and UIDAI, leaving the impression that there was duplication of work, as both involved gathering personal particulars, including biometric data.
- Ultimately, they agreed that **both databases will exist with different objectives** and that each will use the other's biometric data. Those already enrolled for Aadhaar need not give their biometric details again during NPR. At the same time, data captured for NPR would be sent to UIDAI for “de-duplication”. **In case of discrepancy between Aadhaar and NPR data, the latter would prevail.**

The link between NPR and NRIC:

- **Out of the NPR, a set of all usual residents of India, the government proposes to create a database of “citizens of India”.** Thus, the **“National Register of Indian Citizens” (NRIC) is a sub-set of the NPR.** The NRIC will be prepared at the local, sub-district, district and state levels after verifying the citizenship status of the residents.
- **The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 spells out the rules for operationalizing the idea of registering all citizens and issuing national identity cards to them.** However, so far, there has been no decision on introducing a national identity card.

Process for NRIC:

- The rules say the **particulars of every family and individual found in the Population Register shall be verified and scrutinized by the Local Registrar.** In the process, details of those “whose citizenship is doubtful” will be entered with a comment suggesting further inquiry. The family or individual will be informed about it and given an opportunity of being heard by the Sub-district or Taluk Registrar of Citizen Registration before a final decision is made on excluding them from the NRIC. The decision should be made within 90 days.
- **A draft of the Local Register of Indian Citizens shall be published to invite objections or claims for inclusion or corrections.**
- Any objection or request for inclusion must be made within 30 days of the publication of the draft. The sub-district or taluk registrar shall summarily dispose of the objections within 90 days. Thereafter, **the entries in the Local Register will be transferred to the National Registrar.**
- Any person aggrieved by an exclusion order can appeal to the District Registrar within 30 days, and the appeal should be disposed of within 90 days. In case, the appeal succeeds, the names of those concerned would be added to the NRIC.

Documents that would help establish citizenship:

- The government is yet to notify a date for generation of the NRIC. It has not yet prescribed rules for the sort of documentary proof that would be required to prove citizenship.
- The government says any document that shows the date of birth or place of birth, or both, will be sufficient. And that common documents will be accepted, and those unable to produce documents may produce witnesses or other proof supported by members of the community.

Concerns regarding states reluctance:

- Kerala and West Bengal have put on hold activities related to NPR work which appears to be more of a political decision.
- As the house-to-house enumeration is a part of the Census operation, it is unlikely that the NPR process can go ahead without State governments agreeing to deploy their staff for the purpose.
- In practical terms, **it may not be possible for the process to be undertaken without the State government's cooperation at the local level.**

Legal position:

- The legal position is that while the **Centre is in charge of the census, the State governments are expected to provide staff whenever required.**
- **Section 4A of the Census Act**, inserted through a 1994 amendment, says: “Every local authority in a State shall, when so directed by a written order by the Central Government or by an authority appointed by that Government in this behalf, make available to any Director of Census Operations such staff as may be necessary for the performance of any duties in connection with the taking of census.”
- Further, **Rule 5 of the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003**, lays down that “Every official of the Central Government, State Government, local bodies or their undertakings shall assist the Registrar General of Citizen Registration or any person authorized by him in this behalf, in preparation of the database relating to each family and every person, and in implementing the provisions of these rules.”
- **The rules state that it is compulsory on the part of every citizen to assist in the preparation of the National Register of Citizens.**

For more information on this issue: [Click Here](#)

F. Tidbits

1. Ramanujan’s legacy used in signal processing, black hole physics

- The mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan has left behind a rich legacy of problems in pure mathematics. His mathematics, done over a hundred years ago, finds applications today in areas other than pure mathematics, which were not even established during his time (22 December 1887 – 26 April 1920). Two among these are signal processing and black hole physics.

For more information on this topic: [Click Here](#)

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following are not correctly matched?

- Paithani: Uttar Pradesh
- Ilkal saree: Karnataka
- Balaramapuram saree: Kerala
- Pochampalli Ikat: Telangana

[su_dropcap]See[/su_dropcap][su_spoiler title="Answer"]

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Paithani is a variety of sari, named after the Paithantown in Aurangabad Maharashtra state where they are woven by hand. Made from very fine silk, it is considered as one of the most expensive saris in India.
- Paithan formerly Pratiṣṭhāna, is a town with municipal council in Aurangabad district, Maharashtra, India. Paithan is located on the Godavari River. It was the capital of the Satavahana dynasty, which ruled from the second century BCE to the second century CE. It is one of the few inland towns mentioned in the famous first-century Greek book, the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.

Q2. Which of the following statements are correct?

1. Chiru is a medium-sized bovid native to the Tibetan plateau.
2. They are hunted for their underfur, known as shahtoosh.
3. It is classified as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list.

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Tibetan antelope or chiru is a medium-sized bovid native to the Tibetan plateau.
- In 1980s and 1990s, they had become endangered due to massive illegal poaching. They are hunted for their extremely soft, light and warm underfur which is usually obtained after death. This underfur, known as shahtoosh (a Persian word meaning "king of fine wools"), is used to weave luxury shawls.
- In September 2016, Tibetan antelope has been reclassified on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list from Endangered to Near Threatened due to the increased population.

Q3. Which of these statements are wrong?

1. The International Criminal Court has jurisdiction to prosecute nations for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.
2. India has signed the Rome statute of the ICC.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The ICC has jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. An ICC investigation could possibly lead to charges against individuals. States cannot be charged by the ICC.
- The ICC began functioning on 1 July 2002, the date that the Rome Statute entered into force. The Rome Statute is a multilateral treaty that serves as the ICC's foundational and governing document.
- The states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court are those sovereign states that have ratified or have otherwise become a party to, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- The ICC can prosecute only those individuals for war crimes who are nationals of states parties or who have committed the alleged crime in the territory of states parties.
- India is among the 41 nations which have neither signed nor acceded to the Statute.

Q4. which of the following statements are correct?

1. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has been established under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
2. The judgment from the NCLAT cannot be challenged in the Supreme Court of India.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- As part of a comprehensive revamp of the adjudication of corporate law disputes, the NCLAT was constituted with effect from June 1, 2016, for hearing appeals against the orders of the NCLT, which, in turn, simultaneously replaced the erstwhile Company Law Board.
- Constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013, the appellate tribunal was conceived as the dedicated appeals forum for resolving corporate law disputes and speeding up the resolution by taking over the role hitherto played by overburdened High Courts in adjudicating such appeals.
- Besides deciding on prayers against the NCLT's rulings, including in matters relating to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), the NCLAT also serves as the appellate body for those aggrieved by decisions made by the Competition Commission of India or orders passed by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Sections 202 and 211 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- The NCLAT's verdicts can, in turn, be challenged on a question of law in the Supreme Court, within a 60-day window.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was envisaged as part of a comprehensive revamp of the adjudication of corporate law disputes. The recent instances of its rulings being overturned by the Supreme Court is a cause of concern. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. India is among those nations which have neither signed nor acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Discuss the major concerns of India with respect to the statute and functioning of ICC. (10 marks, 150 words)