

15 Dec 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category:POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Meghalaya CM for entry permit

Context:

The ordinance passed by the Meghalaya government for mandatory registration of outsiders entering the State.

Details:

- **The Amended Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Bill (MRRSA) 2019**, similar to the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system, was passed by the Meghalaya Cabinet in the form of an ordinance in November 2019 and is still awaiting the Governor's assent.
- In the backdrop of **protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act** in Northeastern states of India, Meghalaya has demanded that some **"protection" on the lines of the Inner Line Permit (ILP)** be also implemented in the State.
- **Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram are under the ILP system and have been exempted from the Citizenship legislation.**
- The government has stated that the proposed law does not bar outsiders from visiting the State. It is envisaged as an information collection mechanism and anyone who wants to visit Meghalaya has to register beforehand online or on arriving. This would ensure not only the security of the State and but also of the visiting person.

Inner Line Permit (ILP) system:

- Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an **official travel document issued by the Government** to allow inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period.
- It is obligatory for Indian citizens from outside those states to obtain a permit for entering into the protected state.

Features:

- There are **different kinds of ILP's, one for tourists and others for people who intend to stay for long-term periods**, often for employment purposes.
- The ILP is **issued by the concerned state government** and can be availed both by applying online and in person.
- The document **states the dates of travel and specifies the particular areas** in which the ILP holder can travel. It's illegal for the visitor to overstay the time granted in the permit.

Objectives:

- The main objective of the ILP system is **to prevent the settlement of other Indian nationals in these states to protect the indigenous population**. The document also tries to **regulate movement to certain areas located near the international border of India**.

Evolution of the system:

- This is an **offshoot of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873**, which protected Crown's interest in the tea, oil and elephant trade by prohibiting "British subjects" from entering into these "Protected Areas" (to prevent them from establishing any commercial venture that could rival the Crown's agents).
- The word **"British subjects" was replaced by "Citizen of India" in 1950**. Despite the fact that the ILP was originally created by the British to safeguard their commercial interests, it continues to be used in India, officially to **protect tribal cultures in northeastern India**.

Applicable areas:

- **Originally the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram had the ILP system. Recently Manipur too has come under the ILP system.**

- An ILP is required for **certain parts of the Leh district in Jammu and Kashmir** like Nubra valley, Khardung La, Pangong Tso, Tso Moriri, etc. The foreign nationals are required to get Protected Area Permit for this region.

Protected Area Permit (PAP):

- **The Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order 1958** states that a **Protected Area Permit (PAP) is required for non-Indian citizens to visit certain areas in India.**
- Areas under PAP include **All of Sikkim**, Parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.
- **Certain requirements have to be fulfilled** in order to get this permit. Tourists have to travel in groups of at least 2 and have to travel with a registered travel agent only. In some areas, only certain entry/exit points are allowed. In certain areas, non-Indians cannot enter at all. Citizens of Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and Myanmar can get the PAP only with the approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs
- Indian citizens who are not resident in these areas need an Inner Line Permit (ILP) to enter these places. The Inner Line Permit is significantly easier to get.

Restricted Area Permit (RAP):

- **The Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order 1963** states that a **Restricted Area Permit (RAP) is required for non-Indians to visit certain areas in India.**
- RAP is required for all visits to **the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and parts of the state of Sikkim.**
- Unlike PAP, RAP is generally available for individual travellers and can be issued by overseas embassies. **Indian citizens do not need special permission to visit Restricted Areas.**

2. 'Data Protection Bill not in line with draft'

Context:

The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology in December 2019.

Background:

The draft bill, the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018, was prepared by a high-level expert committee headed by former Supreme Court judge **B.N. Srikrishna**.

Details:

- Personal data is data that pertains to characteristics, traits or attributes of identity, which can be used to identify an individual.
- The Bill seeks to provide for the protection of personal data of individuals.

Categorization:

- The Bill **categorizes certain personal data as sensitive personal data**. This includes financial data, biometric data, caste, health data, religious or political beliefs, or any other category of data specified by the government, in consultation with the Authority and the concerned sectoral regulator.

Applicability:

- The Bill governs the processing of personal data by **(i) government, (ii) companies incorporated in India, and (iii) foreign companies dealing with personal data of individuals in India.**

Obligations of data fiduciary:

- **Broad guidelines on the collection, storage, and processing of personal data** by data fiduciary have been laid out in the bill. For instance, personal data can be processed only for specific, clear and lawful purposes. It lays down a **code of conduct**.
- All data fiduciaries must undertake certain transparency and accountability measures such as (i) **implementing security safeguards** (such as data encryption and preventing misuse of data), and (ii) instituting **grievance redressal mechanisms** to address complaints of individuals. They must also institute mechanisms for age verification and parental consent when processing sensitive personal data of children.

Rights of the individual:

- The Bill sets out certain rights of the **individual (or data principal)**. These include the right to (i) obtain confirmation from the fiduciary on whether their personal data has been processed, (ii) **seek correction of inaccurate, incomplete, or out-of-date personal data**, (iii) have personal data transferred to any other data fiduciary in certain circumstances, and (iv) restrict continuing disclosure of their personal data by a fiduciary if it is no longer necessary or consent is withdrawn. This is the provision of the **right to be forgotten**, where the person shall have the right to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data.

Grounds for processing personal data:

- The Bill allows the **processing of data by fiduciaries only if consent is provided by the individual.**
- The **consent needs to be informed, clear, and specific.**
- However, **in certain circumstances, personal data can be processed without consent.** These include: (i) if required by the State for providing benefits to the individual, (ii) legal proceedings, (iii) to respond to a medical emergency.

Data Protection Authority:

- The Bill sets up a **Data Protection Authority** which may: (i) take steps to protect interests of individuals, (ii) prevent misuse of personal data, and (iii) **ensure compliance with the Bill.**
- It will consist of a chairperson and six members, with at least 10 years' expertise in the field of data protection and information technology. Orders of the Authority can be appealed to an Appellate Tribunal. Appeals from the Tribunal will go to the Supreme Court.

Transfer of data outside India:

- **Sensitive personal data may be transferred outside India for processing if explicitly consented to by the individual,** and subject to certain additional conditions. However, such sensitive personal data **should continue to be stored in India.**
- Certain personal data notified as critical personal data by the government can only be processed in India.

Exemptions:

- **The central government can exempt any of its agencies from the provisions of the Act:** (i) in interest of security of state, public order, sovereignty and integrity of India and friendly relations with

foreign states, and (ii) for preventing incitement to commission of any cognizable offence (i.e. arrest without warrant) relating to the above matters.

- Processing of personal data is also exempted from provisions of the Bill for certain other purposes such as (i) prevention, investigation, or prosecution of any offence, or (ii) personal, domestic, or (iii) journalistic purposes. However, **such processing must be for a specific, clear and lawful purpose, with certain security safeguards.**

Offences:

- Offences under the Bill include (i) processing or transferring personal data in violation of the Bill, (ii) failure to conduct a data audit.
- Re-identification and processing of de-identified personal data without consent are punishable.

Sharing of non-personal data with government:

- **The central government may direct data fiduciaries** to provide it with any: (i) non-personal data and (ii) anonymized personal data (where it is not possible to identify data principal) for better targeting of services.

Amendments to other laws:

- The Bill amends the Information Technology Act, 2000 to delete the provisions related to compensation payable by companies for failure to protect personal data.

Concerns:

Data Protection Authority:

- Regarding the constitution of the Data Protection Authority of India, the draft bill recommended that the DPA should comprise people who are independent, people who are representatives of the stakeholders and some government nominees.
- However, **the new bill recommends only government nominees**, giving the government a lot of leeway in its functioning. Given that the governments are a major stakeholder and the data is vulnerable to misuse even by the governments of the day defeats the purpose of the bill.

Bypassing the need for consent:

- Retired Supreme Court judge, B.N. Srikrishna has stated that the current legislation is not in line with the recommendation that no data be processed without the consent of the person.

Autonomy to the government:

- **The Bill gives autonomy to the government in a lot of scenarios.**
- Under the current bill, the government could profile individuals and misuse data in several ways. This information can be accessed without an individual's consent which can be used in framing people and implicating them.

Lack of safeguards:

- All the safeguards suggested by the committee which drafted the bill are no longer part of the Bill.

Against the principle of the right to privacy:

- **The Supreme Court of India (SCI) in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs. Union of India** case has held that the **right to privacy** is protected as an intrinsic part of the **right to life and personal liberty under Article 21** and as a part of the freedoms guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution.
- The judgment's ringing endorsement of the right to privacy as a fundamental right marks a watershed moment in the constitutional history of India.
- There are concerns that the bill in its current form goes against some of the principles laid out in the case and can be challenged in the Supreme Court.

Additional information:

- **The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) (GDPR) is a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy** for all individual citizens of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. 'IORA nations should build a common vision for Indo-Pacific'

Context:

External Affairs Minister's address at the Ministry of External Affairs '**Delhi Dialogue**' on partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.

Details:

- The address dealt with the current scenario and way forward for the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- Significantly, although the 'Delhi Dialogue' conference had participants from **India's Quadrilateral (Quad) partners, the U.S., Australia, and Japan**, Mr. Jaishankar made no mention of the Quad in his address, in line with the government's objective of **keeping the Indo-Pacific strategy separate from the Quad alignment**.

Concerns:

- One of the problems in building partnerships in the Indo-Pacific maritime region was the **lack of consensus** on what such a concept meant or "even **its geographic extent**".
- **While countries like the U.S. define the Indo-Pacific as reaching the Indian subcontinent, India and partners like Japan extend the idea to Africa.**
- A comparison between the **ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum** and the lack of such architecture in the Indo-Pacific region west of India with the exception of Indian Ocean Region Association (IORA) brings to light the **lack of an organization whose reach spans the entire region from end to end**.

Way forward:

Vision for the Region:

- Indian Ocean Region (IORA) countries should build on a common vision for the region and its peoples.
- The vision for the region should be based on the **guiding principle** of ensuring that the region remained **open and free for inclusive partnerships with all, within the parameters of sovereignty, equality, and a rules-based system**.

Increasing connectivity:

- Connectivity is a major challenge for **building better Indo-Pacific partnerships**, and initiatives to enhance the **delivery of development projects** should be hastened.

Scientific initiatives:

- Initiatives like including a Grand Challenges scheme for the IORA; fellowship scheme for up to 100 post-doctoral scholars; place for partners on each other's oceanic research vessels; **co-branded IORA research facilities** should be considered.
- **Regional powers like India should consider sharing of the existing technologies** in India like low-cost, low-energy consuming desalination facilities, which may be useful especially for island nations.

Maritime Security:

- A major challenge in the region is maritime security.
- All the member countries need to work together to **share maritime domain data** to ensure that every link of the maritime security chain is equally strong.
- **Challenges to human security in the wake of natural disasters also needs to be addressed**

2. 'Security ties with India a priority, but China a generous donor on infra'

Context:

Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid's interview.

Details:

- Maldives Foreign Minister met his counterpart S. Jaishankar for the **first India-Maldives Joint Commission to be held in four years**.
- The minister has stated that India-Maldives bilateral ties on development projects are going apace and Maldives is staying the course on Chinese projects, despite misgivings over past loans.

India-Maldives Relations:

Frosty relations:

- **Since 2015**, India-Maldives have not had a joint commission meeting, the formal process of interaction between the two countries. In the previous government's tenure, there were many **irritants between the two countries**.

India's Developmental assistance:

- Since the formation of the new government, **India has announced \$1.4 billion in budgetary support in addition to an \$8,000-million line of credit**.
- Indian assistance is spread out with it focusing on **both small development projects (SDPs) and large infrastructure projects**. Projects having a **social impact** have been the focus. An India-assisted convention centre on one of the islands has brought in livelihood for people as well as fish processing projects.

Defence Assistance:

- The security relationship between the two goes back decades. Given the geographical location of India and the Maldives, it is India which is placed best to come to Maldives assistance immediately.
- **India has the means and the location**, but it also has a generous heart towards the Maldives, which actually makes the security relationship a reality.

China factor:

- **China's foray has changed the geopolitics of the region.** Chinese warship's docking in Male harbour, caused deep misgivings in India.
- China has invested in housing and infrastructure projects placing the Maldives under the threat of a **debt trap**. There have been domestic calls for cancelling Chinese loans and projects, revoking of the FTA with China and restructuring of the debt.

Maldives role in Indian Ocean region:

- All players in the region need to ensure that the Indian Ocean remains peaceful, which is necessary for the stability of the Maldives. If intercountry rivalries play out in the Indian Ocean, Maldives will suffer.
- The Maldives is a large ocean state, with more ocean than land. For it the freedom of navigation, the **total concept of the Indo-Pacific strategy** is paramount.

People to people relations:

- In a move to **promote people to people contacts**, India is keen to see the Maldives as an international cricketing nation and is building a cricket stadium in the Maldives.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: AGRICULTURE

1. Farmers highlight indigenous farming practices at conclave

Context:

- Tribal Swaraj and Sovereignty Conclave held in Banswara, Rajasthan in the backdrop of agricultural distress and tribal distress in India.

Details:

- Farmers from the tribal belt of southern Rajasthan highlighted their struggle to save **indigenous agricultural practices** as well as their efforts for **rainwater harvesting, soil conservation and farming of medicinal plants** at the event.
- The event focused on sustainable farming and **safeguarding of forest, land, and seeds**.

Way forward:

Emphasis on traditional approaches:

- A renewed emphasis on protecting the natural rain-fed agricultural techniques would help save uncultivated nutritious food and make the **tribal farmers self-sufficient**.
- The tribals have an “**enormous storehouse**” of knowledge on food gathering, shifting hill cultivation, pastoralism, labour, and handicrafts which needs to be harnessed.
- Tribal farmers should be encouraged to define their own food and agricultural systems in order to get **healthy and culturally appropriate** food produced in a sustainable manner.

Sustainable agriculture:

- A collective approach for **restoring traditional methods of water harvesting** must be emphasized on keeping in India the Water stress in India.
- Given the harmful effects of pesticides on the environment and the economic burden on farmers, **reducing the use of pesticides** should be prioritized given the availability of the more **economical and environmentally friendly approach of integrated pest management**.
- There is the need for maintaining traditional practices in animal husbandry as well given the studies which throw light on the **harmful effects of vaccination of milch animals for more milk**.
- Using the locally available materials like cow dung as fertilizers should be prioritized.

Economic supplement:

- **The traditional crops of the region should be patented** for ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers and generating revenue for the government.

Decentralized community-driven approach:

- Village Panchayats should revive traditional farming systems without the government’s interference following a **decentralized approach**. The utilization of untied funds may help in this direction. This approach could meet the **special needs of a particular region**.

Scope for scientific interventions:

- The farmers while maintaining the traditional methods could **supplement them with a few scientific interventions**. They should consider going for **soil testing** first and try to make up for the missing nutrients before sowing the crops.
- The formation of Kisan Sangathan for the **marketing of farm produce** would yield better value for farmers.

Integrated Development:

- **An integrated approach is necessitated** in the issues of land degradation, community forestry, malnutrition-free tribal development, community seed management, **circular economy**, child labour and migration and the significance of Gram Sabha for the **empowerment of tribal communities**.

Category:INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Three lakh rural habitations lack quality drinking water supply

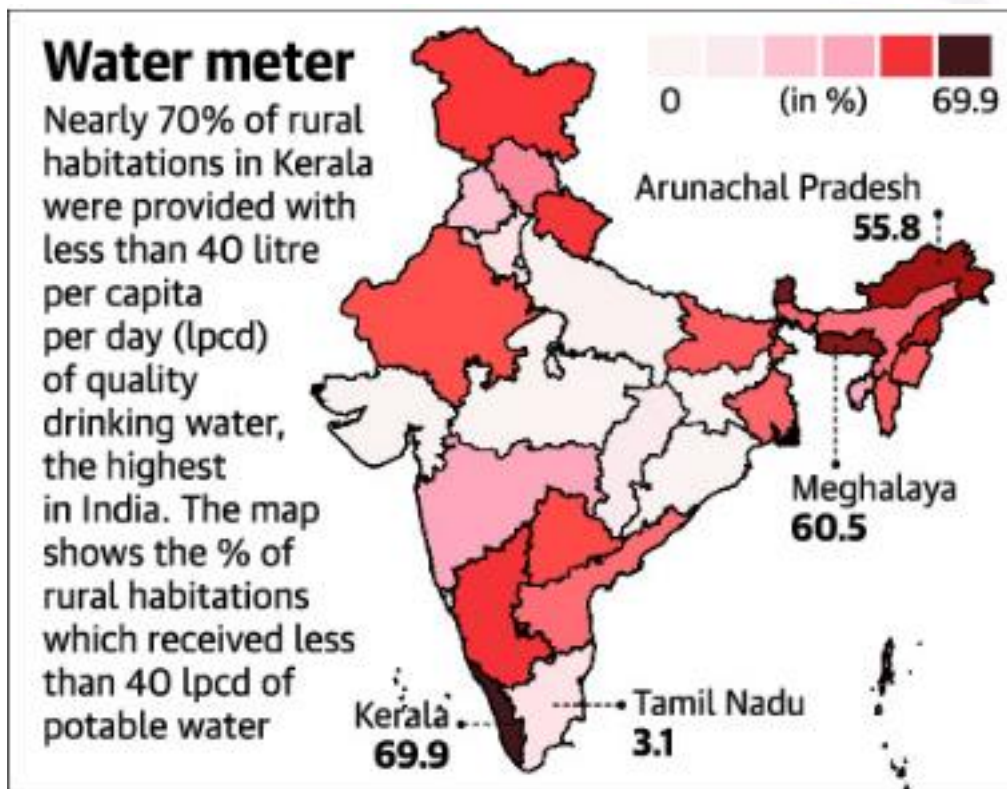
Context:

The data presented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in the Lok Sabha.

Background:

- To meet the domestic needs of every rural household, the **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** has been launched in August 2019 which aims at **providing potable water through Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) at a service level of 55 lpcd by 2024**. This involves coordination between the center and the states.
- The aim and objective of **National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)** is to provide every rural person with adequate safe water for drinking, cooking and other basic domestic needs on a **sustainable basis, with a minimum water quality standard, which should be conveniently accessible at all times and in all situations**. Achieving this aim and objective is a continuous process.
- The fund-sharing pattern between the Centre and the States/UTs for the National Rural Drinking Water Programme, a centrally sponsored programme, was 100% for the Union Territories, 90:10 for the Himalayan & the northeastern States and 50:50 for other States. It involves assistance from the World Bank.
- To provide safe drinking water to 27,544 identified arsenic and fluoride affected rural habitations, **the National Water Quality Sub-Mission** was launched.

Details and Concerns:



- **Over three lakh rural habitations across the country continue to be deprived of the government’s minimum prescribed provision of 40 litre per capita per day (lpcd) of potable drinking water with assured quality.**
- As reported by States/UTs till Dec. 2019, 81.27% rural habitations having 76.61% population have provision of minimum 40 lpcd of potable drinking water and 15.56% rural habitations having 19.69% population have service level of less than 40 lpcd, whereas 3.17% rural habitations having 3.69% population are with water sources having quality issues.
- The Ministry noted that the coverage was monitored in terms of habitations having the provision of a minimum 40 lpcd with sources at a reasonable distance. This is **not in line with the concept of Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC)** as envisaged in the Jal Jeevan mission.

- **Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam top the list in deprivation** where the coverage is facing quality issues or seeing diminished supply. Bihar, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand are the other States which are battling the problem.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Google wants U.S. Fed to follow India's UPI example

Context:

Google's appreciation of India's **Unified Payment Interface** system.

Background:

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** deployed a real-time payment system Unified Payment Interface (UPI) in 2016.

Features of UPI:

- First, UPI is an **interbank transfer system** [there are now over 140 member banks, after initially launching with 9 participating banks].
- Second, it is a **real-time system**.
- Third, it is **'open'** meaning technology companies can build applications that help users directly manage transfers into and out of their accounts held at banks.

Success:

- UPI was **thoughtfully planned and critical aspects of its design** led to its success.
- After just three years, the annual run rate of transactions flowing through UPI is **about 10% of India's GDP**, including 800 million monthly transactions valued at \$19 billion.
- According to the latest Worldline report titled **'India Digital Payments Report — Q3 2019'**, the total volume of UPI transactions in Q3 2019 in India touched 2.7 billion, a whopping 183% rise from a year ago. In value, UPI clocked ₹4.6 trillion, **up 189%** from Q3 2018.
- According to a recent Assocham-PWC study, **digital payments in India will more than double** to \$135.2 billion in 2023 from \$64.8 billion this year, with a compounded annual growth of 20.2%.

Details:

- In a thumbs up to India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) scheme, Google has written to the U.S. Federal Reserve Board detailing the successful example of UPI-based digital payments in India in order to **build 'FedNow' — a new interbank real-time gross settlement service (RTGS) for faster digital payments in the U.S.**
- Google said after learning its lessons from the India digital payments market, it offered specific suggestions to the Fed Reserve to **"support real-time low-value and high-value payments, use standardized messaging protocols with extended metadata, and provide clear standards for an Application Programming Interface (API) layer that enables licensed non-financial institution third parties to access and submit requests into this payment system.**

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category:POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Why is the Northeast on the boil?

Context:

Protests over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 in the states of Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya.

Background:

- **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019** Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on December 11 and the President of India gave his assent on December 12.
- There have been **violent protests** against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- Some States were kept outside the purview of the Act, which will **grant citizenship to Hindus and other non-Muslim minorities of three countries, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan**, under the **Sixth Schedule and the inner line permit (ILP) system**, but there is unease on the ground about what it will mean for the **ethnic diversity of the region**.
- In Assam, for example, observers say the **division between the Assamese-speaking Brahmaputra Valley and the Bengali-speaking Barak Valley is likely to deepen**; and that **relations between tribals and the Bengali-speaking majority in Tripura** will suffer.
- The rules of CAA under which Hindu and other minorities may get amnesty have not yet been specified.

Details:

Assam:

History:

- **Between 1979 and 1985, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad** spearheaded a movement against illegal migration, which had been simmering for long, leading to widespread violence and insurgencies by various outfits including the United Liberation Front of Assam.
- After thousands of lives were lost, **the Assam Accord was signed in 1985** that aimed to address two key concerns of the Assamese people: **stop “foreigners” from Bangladesh and provide some constitutional safeguards for Assamese citizens**.
- First, the **cut-off date for foreigners to gain citizenship was set at March 25, 1971**, though, initially, the leaders of the movement wanted illegal migrants to be expelled as per the National Register of Citizens 1951 of Assam; agitation leaders had also spoken of a 1967 cut-off; and Clause 6 of the Accord stated that “constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate,

shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.”

Protection under the Sixth Schedule:

- **The CAA, 2019, while inserting a new sub-section 6B**, listing out the provisions to grant citizenship rights to Hindu and other non-Muslim minorities of three countries, says “nothing in this section shall apply to **tribal area[s] of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution** and the area covered under ‘**The Inner Line**’ notified under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873**”.
- The Sixth Schedule allows the constitution of **autonomous district councils in tribal areas: Assam (three), Meghalaya (three), Mizoram (three) and Tripura (one)** — 10 in all in the Northeast.
- Thus in Assam, there are the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (for the Karbi Anglong District), the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council (for the Dima Hasao or the erstwhile North Cachar Hills District) and the Bodoland Territorial Council (The Bodoland Territorial Areas District). These regions are **exempt from the purview of the Act**.

Concerns with the CAA:

- The AASU has filed a petition in the Supreme Court of India challenging the Act that it violates the Assam accord.
- According to Census 2011, Assam has a population of 3.12 crore, with 61.47% Hindus, and 34.22 % Muslims. Around 12.44% of the population is tribal, comprising Bodos and others. The **Tribal States of the Northeast have got protection from the CAA with the ILP system, unlike Assam**.

Tripura:

History:

- In 2015, after insurgency appeared to have waned, **the Tripura government revoked the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA**.
- The AFSPA, which had been in force in the State since 1997, was repealed after elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. It had been a long-standing demand of tribal parties such as the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura and the Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura.
- After the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was passed, protests broke out in at least four districts, **shattering years of peace**.

Concerns with CAA:

- Around 32% of the people of Tripura, which has a population of about 36 lakh, are tribal.
- Some sections have noted the fact that the state has been overrun by migrants, first from East Pakistan and later from Bangladesh. Now, the **Bengali-speaking population is a majority in Tripura and runs the affairs of the state**. Fears of a similar fate are real and widely held across all states in the region.

Meghalaya:

- **Most of Meghalaya is protected from CAB because of the Sixth Schedule — some areas of capital Shillong, however, fall outside its purview**. But there is a demand to extend ILP to the State.
- Protesters want the Governor to give his nod to a proposed ordinance that seeks mandatory registration of outsiders entering the State offering **protection like the ILP**.

Manipur:

- The ILP was withdrawn from Manipur in 1950.
- The State government's attempts to reintroduce it through three bills led to violent protests by tribals in 2015.
- Chief Minister N. Biren Singh mooted the idea again in 2018 and one of the bills, the Manipur People's Protection Bill, was passed after consultations with all stakeholders including tribals.
- **The ILP regulates the visit of outsiders to States under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.** It was in force in three northeastern states, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, but recently, **Manipur too came under the ILP regime.**
- Manipur has a population of 28.56 lakh, according to the 2011 Census, with 41.39% Hindus and 41.29% Christians and a host of tribes including the Tangkhul Nagas and Kukis.

Nagaland:

- **In Nagaland, Dimapur, the commercial hub of the State which had been outside the ILP, was brought under its purview.**
- Dimapur has a large population of non-tribals.
- The Nagaland government notification says that every non-indigenous person who settled or entered Dimapur on or after November 21, 1979, will have to obtain an ILP within 90 days. **Now that Dimapur too has become a "tribal belt", all 12 districts of Nagaland are under ILP.**
- As the National Register of Citizens was being updated in Assam last year, the Nagaland Tribes Council, Tribal Hohos and a group of civil organizations petitioned the State government to seek changes in the colonial era law (Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873) to **bring the entire State under ILP to protect the "indigenous people" from outsiders, including "illegal migrants" from Bangladesh.**

2. Tech titans under watch

Context:

Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Apple facing antitrust probes in the USA.

Background:

- After **years of blistering growth** driven by an ever-growing share of the online ad market and big data, the giants of Silicon Valley, including **Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google**, are now facing an unprecedented challenge with **calls by lawmakers to curb their market monopoly power.**
- There are **two sources of tension** relating to these four tech firms that have caused alarm across the United States, Europe and elsewhere:
- Firstly they may have **engaged in anti-competitive behaviour** over many years thus **undercutting smaller potential rivals and holding onto an outsized market share.**
- Secondly, as a result of this **metastatic growth, they now have a vast influence on politics, policy and personal reputations across the spectrum**, making the **cost of data privacy breaches** by these firms catastrophic.
- In July 2019 the United States Justice Department and the House Judiciary Committee separately announced **major antitrust investigations** into Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Apple promising "a top-to-bottom review of the market power held by **giant tech platforms.**"
- They have announced a bipartisan investigation into competition and "**abusive conduct**" in the tech sector and specifically in the "**market-leading online platforms**".
- Over the next few months, Attorneys-General across 50 U.S. states and territories announced a joint antitrust probe into Google and Facebook, and the House Antitrust Subcommittee made an enormous

information demand to all four tech giants, requesting 10 years' worth of detailed records relating to competition, acquisitions, and other matters relevant to the investigation.

The prognosis for the antitrust case:

- In the U.S. the cases against the four tech firms will likely be centered on possible violations of **the Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts** — two laws that have been foundational in the past century of federal antitrust prosecutions.

The Clayton Antitrust Act:

- **The Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914**, was a part of United States antitrust law with the Clayton Act seeking to **prevent anti-competitive practices in their incipiency**.
- The Act defines unethical business practices, such as **price-fixing and monopolies**, and upholds various rights of labour.
- The Clayton Antitrust Act **prohibits anti-competitive mergers, predatory and discriminatory pricing**, and other forms of **unethical corporate behaviour**.

The Sherman Antitrust Act:

- **The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890** is a United States antitrust law that **regulates competition** among enterprises, which was passed by Congress under the presidency of Benjamin Harrison.
- The Sherman Act broadly prohibits (1) **anti-competitive agreements** and (2) **unilateral conduct** that monopolizes or attempts to monopolize the relevant market.

Concerns:

Amazon:

- **The disruptive effect of its online sales platform on traditional retail markets and smaller sellers** has resulted in lawmakers for years and in multiple countries contemplating regulations to clamp down on **Amazon's alleged anti-competitive practices**.
- Questions have often been raised on whether **Amazon favours its self-branded products** over those of third-party sellers, by requiring other sellers to use its advertising services or fulfillment network, by rankings of product search displays, or by using data on other sellers to tweak its own offerings to its advantage.
- Regulators are also said to be looking into the **conglomerate's acquisition of Whole Foods**, an upmarket U.S. grocery chain.

Apple:

- In September 2019, U.S. congressional investigators demanded documents from Apple to shed light on the **company's App Store policies**, specifically regarding how Apple ranks search results on that platform, questions surrounding how Apple determines the share of revenue it takes from in-app purchases, and the **exclusion of certain competing apps from the Store**.
- For example, Spotify and those behind certain parental-control apps have filed complaints to regulators in the U.S., Europe, and Russia about **Apple's alleged restriction** of their apps once the tech giant introduced self-made competing services.

Facebook:

- Regulators have focused their attention on **Facebook's acquisitive streak in capital markets**, for example, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) inquiry into whether Facebook **defensively purchased certain companies to maintain its pre-eminent market position in the social networking ecosystem**.
- Specifically, questions have centered on Facebook's relationship with Onavo, a data analysis firm that Facebook purchased in 2013, which then allegedly helped the social media giant see off potential competitors. Investigators have also started looking into allegations that Facebook may have cut off certain third-party apps from its data.

Google:

- **Google handles more than 90% of online searches across the world**, so regulators have been observing its delivery of search results under a microscope.
- In recent years concern has grown over the fact that **Google has increasingly been sending users to its own sites to answer their queries**, including products such as Google Flights and Google Maps.
- Thus, Google may find itself grilled by regulators over whether it is **abusing its search dominance**, to the detriment of rival content producers. **The European Union has already fined Google \$5.1 billion in 2018**.

F. Tidbits

1. Outlines of new Rajasthan industrial policy announced

- Rajasthan has announced the outlines of a new industrial policy, which will attract investments and offer **one-stop solutions and timely disposal of grievances**, besides introducing several innovative measures, including **bridge finance, to promote micro, small and medium enterprises**.
- The policy's "unique features" would **generate employment and spur the State's growth**.
- As many as 104 permissions for new industrial units from 17 departments will be available at a one-stop window.
- A plan of action had already been formulated for resolving issues related to power, water, pollution, and revenue.
- The State government has also announced State-level export awards, under which 30 exporters in various categories have been selected.

2. Session productive, quality of debates improved: Venkaiah

- **The 250th session of the Rajya Sabha** adjourned sine die, recorded near 100% productivity.
- The vice president in his valedictory address said the Upper House clocked the best performance in 49 years with an average 9.5 **starred questions** orally replied every day and 39% of the time spent on passing Bills.
- The Chairman said that during the session, 39% of the functional time was spent on legislative business, 25.4% on raising and discussing matters of urgent public importance under various instruments, 13% on **Question Hour** and 5% on **private members' bills**.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Samples from Bennu

- **OSIRIS Rex mission** will be NASA's first to collect samples from an asteroid and return to Earth. It has been orbiting **asteroid Bennu** since December 2018.

2. NPPA hikes ceiling price of 12 essential medicines

- **The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** has hiked the ceiling price of 12 essential first-line treatment drugs, crucial in the public health programme, by 50% to ensure the availability of these drugs.
- The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is a **government regulatory agency that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India**. The NPPA regularly publishes lists of medicines and their maximum ceiling prices
- The NPPA invoked extraordinary powers under para 19 of **Drug Price Control Orders (DPCO) 2013** for upward revision of the low-priced drugs.
- Drug Price Control Orders (DPCO) are issued by the Government, **in exercise of the powers conferred under section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955**, for enabling the Government to declare a ceiling price for essential and lifesaving medicines (as per a prescribed formula) so as to ensure that these medicines are available at a reasonable price to the general public.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements are correct?

1. The National Ganga Council was constituted in 2016 to oversee the cleaning of the Ganga.
2. One of the Chief Ministers of the States through which the Ganga flows becomes the Chairman of the national Ganga council on a rotational basis.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga is an authority created in October 2016 under the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016, dissolving the National Ganga River Basin Authority. In this backdrop, National Ganga Council has been established as an authority and National Mission for Clean Ganga has been also converted into an authority.

- The National Ganga Council will be overall responsible for the superintendence, direction, development and control of River Ganga and the entire River Basin (including financial and administrative matters) for the protection, prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in River Ganga and its rejuvenation to its natural and pristine condition and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water in the River Ganga and for matters connected therewith.
- The PM is the chairperson of the National Ganga Council.

Q2. which of the following statements are correct?:

1. Train 18, is an Indigenous semi-high speed
2. It is an engine-less train consisting of electric self-propelling multiple units.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, is an Indian semi-high speed intercity electric multiple unit. It was designed and built by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai under the Indian government's Make in India initiative over a span of 18 months.
- It does not consist of a separate engine coach but consists of electric self-propelling multiple units.

Q3. which of the following statements are wrong?

1. Mahanadi basin stretches over the states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha
2. The Hirakud dam is built across the Mahanadi.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The catchment area of the basin extends over major parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha and comparatively smaller portions of Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- The Mahanadi was notorious for its devastating floods for much of recorded history. Thus it was called 'the sorrow of Orissa'. However the construction of the Hirakud Dam has greatly altered the situation.
- Mahanadi River passes through the Satkosia Tiger Reserve in Odisha.
- The major tributaries of Mahanadi include the Seonath, Ib, Hasdeo, Ong and Jonk.

Q4. Which of the following statements are correct?

1. The Inner line Permit system is applicable only to the three states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram.
2. The Protected area permit is required for the Non-Indians to visit Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar islands.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Inner Line Permit (ILP) system:

- Originally the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram had the ILP system. Recently Manipur too has come under the ILP system.
- An ILP is required for certain parts of the Leh district in Jammu and Kashmir like Nubra valley, Khardung La, Pangong Tso, Tso Moriri, etc.

Protected Area Permit (PAP):

- The Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order 1958 states that a Protected Area Permit (PAP) is required for non-Indian citizens to visit certain areas in India.
- Areas under PAP include All of Sikkim, Parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

Restricted Area Permit (RAP):

- The Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order 1963 states that a Restricted Area Permit (RAP) is required for non-Indians to visit certain areas in India.
- RAP is required for all visits to the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and parts of the state of Sikkim.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In the backdrop of reducing agricultural productivity and Farmer distress in India, reverting back to some principles of the traditional agricultural methods, supplemented by high impact scientific interventions seems to provide a viable way forward. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. Indian Ocean Region Association (IORA) can play the important role of filling the vacuum of the lack of an organization whose reach spans the entire region of the Indo Pacific. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)

