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### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Questionnaire of NPR being finalised: RGI

##### **Context:**

The office of the Registrar-General of India (RGI) has said the schedule, or the questionnaire, of the National Population Register (NPR) is being finalised.

#### **National Population Register**

- National Population Register is a register of usual residents of the country.
- NPR is different from both the decennial census and the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)**.

- It will be in pursuance of the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
- It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- The decision exempts the state of Assam from NPR-2020.
- For the purpose of the NPR, a usual resident is defined as a person who has resided in a local area for six months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months or more.
- The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.
- It will be the next round of recording biometric and family tree details of Indian citizens.
- The exercise was conducted earlier in two phases in 2010 and 2015.

#### **Details:**

- The first phase of the Census – House listing & Housing census – and an update of the NPR was earlier scheduled to begin on April 1, 2020.
- The two were to be conducted simultaneously from April to September but were postponed indefinitely due to the pandemic.

#### **Issue:**

- As many as 13 States and Union Territories have opposed the update of the NPR due to its link to the proposed National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.
- Critics allege that NRC, NPR and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act would shield non-Muslim illegal immigrants while making a large number of Muslims stateless people with an uncertain future.

## **2. 'Bindas Bol' is offensive, says I&B Ministry**

#### **Context:**

An order of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting – placed on record in the Supreme Court has said that Sudarshan TV's 'Bindas Bol – UPSC Jihad' programme is not in good taste, offensive and has the likelihood of promoting communal attitudes.

#### **Concerns:**

- The Ministry has cautioned the channel to be careful and has promised stricter penal action in case of further violations.
- However, the Ministry order does not expressly stop the channel from telecasting further episodes.

#### **Note:**

Recently a Gazette notification was issued, placing online news and current affairs portals under the ambit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Read more on this topic covered in **13th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

## **3. Getting MGNREGS wages harder than the labour**

#### **Context:**

Problems being faced by the rural workers dependent on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

**Issue:**

- According to a study by LibTech India, many of the workers are forced to make multiple trips to the bank, adding travel costs and income losses, and face repeated rejections of payment, biometric errors and wrong information, just to get their hands on their wages.
  - The study found that almost 40% of the workers must make multiple trips to the bank branch to withdraw their money.
  - The branch is usually at the block headquarters, a significant distance from the home village, and the time spent at the bank is three to four hours, a worker will also lose the day's wages while he/she attempts to withdraw money.
  - This effectively works out to spending a third of the weekly wage just to withdraw it.
- The study found that only one in 10 workers get an SMS message that their wages have been credited. A third of workers must visit the bank branch just to find out whether their wages have been credited.
- It was also found that despite being informed that their wages had been credited, they found that the money was not in the accounts.
- The last mile challenges make it hard for workers to access their own wages in a timely manner. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation is exacerbated as transport becomes harder.

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**1. Who won the war over Karabakh?**

**Context:**

After weeks of fierce fighting, Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to end military operations in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in a ceasefire brokered by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

This topic has been covered in the **18th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

**Category: HEALTH**

**1. Vaccine trial showed 95% success: Pfizer**

**Context:**

Pfizer Inc would seek emergency U.S. approval for its COVID-19 vaccine. The final trial results showed that its shot had a 95% success rate and no serious side effects.

This topic has been covered in the **18th November 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

**C. GS 3 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

**E. Editorials**

## Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

### 1. Reinventing cities

#### Context

- Post COVID-19, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has called for changes in urban planning to make our cities more liveable and sustainable, with better amenities.
- He emphasized resetting the mindset, processes and practices for safe urban living, and acknowledged that governments actually do little for the working millions.

#### Liveable Cities

- According to the PM, liveable meant having better housing, better work environment and short and efficient travel facilities.

#### Need for change

- In the first hundred days of the pandemic, the top 10 cities affected worldwide accounted for 15% of the total cases.
- In the Indian context, cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, became the epicenters of the disease.
  - It was due to the density of the population infections erupted, and this eventually spread to smaller towns as well due to reverse migration from the cities.
- Therefore the PM is looking at developing a strategy beyond the current pandemic.

#### Affordable Housing

- Mumbai is estimated to have added only 5% of rental housing in New Residential Construction (1961-2000), and that too led by private funding.
- The abject housing conditions of migrant labourers in major cities in India has come under scrutiny during the pandemic, with virus hotspots in slums.
- Creating well-designed good affordable housing to tackle inequality is one way governments can help economies recover from the crisis.
  - The post-COVID-19 era, therefore, presents an opportunity to make schemes such as the Centre's Affordable Rental Housing Complexes deliver at scale, focusing on new good houses built by the state – on the lines of the post-war reconstruction in Europe, Japan and South Korea.

#### Way forward

- The Ministry of Housing, which until now has focused on smart cities, can work with State Governments to collect the data on housing requirements to meet the demand and supply in each city.
- Laws on air pollution, municipal solid waste management and water quality should be implemented in its true spirit.
- Past scourges such as cholera, the plague and the global flu pandemic a century ago led to change in waste handling, social housing and health care. It is now important that governments show the political will to reinvent the cities.

## Category: ECONOMY

## 1. The need for 'maximum government'

### Context

- The article speaks about expanding the role of the Government to soften the economic impact of Coronavirus and to revive growth in the economy.

### Issues with the Economic Revival

- The Central Government, as part of relief measures under Atmanirbhar, provided incentives to the business sector with an assumption that they would make investments to revive the economy.
  - But corporate investments depend on two parameters, one is sales, the other is credit from the institutions. Both parameters are tied to each other.
  - Only when the existing stocks are sold and profits are made, companies would want to make investments in the market. Lack of profits with an increase in credit support will not entice the corporates.
  - This is in general true for both big businesses as well as MSMEs. However detailed the credit package may be, in times of deep economic crises, they will not deliver as they will be wary of taking more loans.
- The banking sector is offering loans at a lower rate of interest to induce the household sector.
  - But when there is a cloud of doubt over future incomes (or dwindling current income) and if people are not sure of a regular salary in the immediate (or even distant) future which affects their capacity to pay EMIs on these loans, why would they take the risk of taking a loan?
- Even if we assume that there are takers for these loans, if the banks are burdened with bad loans as a result of past decisions, they might refuse to pass on the fall in the policy rate to the consumers in order to increase their margins to cover for the past losses, in which case the very premise of a fall in the cost of loans is violated.

Such credit lines, guarantees or the low cost of loans, therefore, hardly have an effect on reviving demand in the economy.

### Way forward

- FRBM should be kept in abeyance, both for the Centre and the States, and the government should inject a fiscal stimulus of at least ₹10 lakh crore and borrow to finance it or, if required, monetize the deficit.
  - The stimulus can include among other things, free ration and other essentials like oil, soap and cooking gas for a period of six months;
  - Cash transfer till employment opportunities are back; and
  - An urban employment guarantee law.
- It is now the right time to make massive investments in the underfunded health sector by building a robust public health infrastructure on the principle of public provisioning instead of the insurance route which has failed in the U.S.
- The crisis provides us a chance to make laws with respect to climate change both at the national and international levels. There cannot be a better time than this for a green deal, which addresses both the demand and supply side of emissions.
  - A comprehensive green deal can be planned, partly financed by the government and partly by carbon tax, which not only changes the energy mix of the economy but also makes the poor and the marginalised a part of a sustainable development process.

### Conclusion

- The COVID crisis has provided us with an opportunity to rethink our health, economic and climate policies.
- Therefore, we can choose to act now to prevent future harm and to create a better world for this and future generations.

## Category: POLITY

### 1. Amid a judicial slide, a flicker of hope on rights- Bail applications

#### General Criminal Procedure

- Sections 436-439 of the [Criminal Procedure Code \(CrPC\)](#) has provisions for bail for various offences.

Factors to be considered in bail application as decided in **State of U.P. through CBI vs. Amarmani Tripathi, (2005)**:

- whether there is any prima facie or reasonable ground to believe that the accused had committed the offence;
- nature and gravity of the charge;
- severity of the punishment in the event of conviction;
- danger of the accused absconding or fleeing, if released on bail;
- character, behaviour, means, position and standing of the accused;
- likelihood of the offence being repeated; reasonable apprehension of the witnesses being tampered with;
- danger of justice being thwarted by grant of bail.

Read more on [Bail](#).

Section 4(2) CrPC

- It gives power to special laws apart from the [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#) to lay down separate procedures.
- Various statutes dealing with a special set of crimes have thus crafted distinct provisions for bail and a few of them have made a grant of bail more stringent than CrPC.

#### Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

- Special statutes have additional restrictions apart from these eight conditions. The criteria for bail under UAPA therefore differ.

Background

- Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali was alleged to have been involved in unlawful acts and terror funding.
- He was accused of transferring funds received from Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed, the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, among others, to Hurriyat leaders.
- The NIA claimed Watali helped them wage war against the government of India by repeated attacks on security forces and government establishments.

National Investigation Agency (NIA) vs Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali

- The Supreme Court on the interpretation of UAPA said the [National Investigation Agency](#) has gathered enough evidence to believe that the accusations against Watali are prima facie true.

- The Court has ruled that an accused must remain in custody throughout the period of a trial, even if the evidence against the person is eventually proven inadmissible (and the accused is acquitted).
- The SC under the UAPA said that the burden of proving whether the allegations made in the first information report is correct or not rests on the accused and he has to refute the allegations if bail has to be granted to the accused.
- The Supreme Court's interpretation was on the UAPA alone, and not on general criminal procedure.

#### Concerns

- Broad offences included under the UAPA and difficult bail conditions mean individuals can be detained indefinitely even without the conviction of the accused.
- Even if the person is eventually acquitted of the charges, the delays in conducting judicial proceedings mean the case may only get heard several years after their arrest – failure to get bail means they have to spend the entire time in jail.
- It has left a glaring loophole for rampant abuse by the government, police and prosecution alike.

#### Conclusion

- Therefore, the bail provision under UAPA is distinct. While other statutes require recording of an opinion by the court that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is “not guilty” of the alleged offence, UAPA requires recording of an opinion by the court deciding bail that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is “prima facie” true.

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Army builds extreme weather habitats for troops in Ladakh

#### What's in News?

The Army has completed building extreme weather habitats for thousands of additional troops in Ladakh to remain deployed through the harsh winter.

- Additional state of the art habitats with integrated arrangements for electricity, water, heating facilities, health and hygiene have been created.
- The development comes in the backdrop of the ongoing deliberations on a proposed disengagement and de-escalation plan to end the stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

Read more on the [India-China border clash](#).

### 2. Finance panel for PPPs on health infra

#### What's in News?

The 15th Finance Commission has mooted a greater role for public-private partnerships to ramp up health infrastructure and scale up public spending on health from 0.95% of the GDP to 2.5% by 2024.

#### Details:

- The chairperson of the 15th Finance Commission hinted that the commission has recommended

steps to fix the skewed availability of healthcare across India as poorer States have the worst facilities.

- He recommended:
  - Substantial improvements in the working conditions for doctors in government hospitals, many of whom are hired on a contract basis by the States.
  - The creation of an Indian Medical Service cadre as envisaged in the Civil Services Act, 1951.

### 3. 'Extend PLI to laptops to help tap \$100-bn market'

#### What's in News?

In a report titled 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat: India's Turning Point', the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), has said that the manufacturing of laptops and tablets presents a \$100-billion opportunity for India by 2025 provided there is a 'conducive policy environment' and incentives.

- The report noted that the global market for these products is expected to be about \$220 billion per year over the next five years.
  - In India, the market size is estimated to continue to be about \$7 billion for the same period.
- This presents an opportunity for India to ramp up the export of 'Made in India' laptops and tablets.
- Making in India for the world will give India a manufacturing value of \$100 billion by 2025, the report said.

Read more about the [Production Linked Incentive \(PLI\) Scheme](#).

### 4. ICMR against indiscriminate use of plasma therapy

#### What's in News?

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has warned against the indiscriminate use of convalescent plasma therapy (CPT) for treating COVID-19.

- It has asserted that the benefits of CPT in improving the clinical outcomes, reducing the severity of the disease, duration of hospitalisation and mortality in patients were dependent on the concentration of specific antibodies in convalescent plasma that could neutralise the effects of SARS-CoV-2.
- It stated that the CPT could be used with specific criteria, including that potential donors could give plasma after 14 days of symptom resolution.
- PLACID is the world's largest pragmatic trial on CPT conducted in 464 moderately ill, confirmed affected adults in a real-world setting, wherein no benefit of use of CPT could be established, the ICMR said.

Read more on [convalescent plasma therapy \(CPT\)](#).

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. DNA sequencing is the process of determining the order of nucleotides in DNA.
2. Human Genome is made up of 23 chromosome pairs.
3. Genomics involves the sequencing and analysis of genomes through the use of high throughput DNA sequencing.



**Which of the given statement/s is/are INCORRECT?**

1. 2 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 1 only
4. None of the above

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- DNA sequencing is the process of determining the nucleic acid sequence – the order of nucleotides in DNA.
- Human Genome is made up of 23 chromosome pairs.
- A genome is an organism's complete set of DNA, including all of its genes. Genomics is an interdisciplinary field of science focusing on the structure, function, evolution, mapping, and editing of genomes. Genomics involves the sequencing and analysis of genomes through the use of high throughput DNA sequencing.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the National Population Register (NPR):**

1. The NPR is a register of usual residents of the country.
2. For the purpose of NPR, a person who has resided in a local area for the past 7 years or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 7 years or more is a usual resident.
3. The NPR database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.

**Which of the given statement/s is/are INCORRECT?**

1. 1 and 3 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 2 only
4. 2 and 3 only

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The National Population Register (NPR) is a register of usual residents of the country.
- It will be prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National levels under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.
- The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.

**Q3. Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) for HIV Prevention is under the aegis of:**

1. United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

2. World Health Organisation (WHO)
3. International Health Organisation (IHO)
4. International HIV/AIDS Alliance (IHAA)

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) for HIV Prevention comes under the aegis of the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

1. Sex ratio is the number of men per thousand women in a given population.
2. Child sex ratio takes into account children in the age group of 0-6 years.

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

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Sex ratio is the number of women per thousand men in a given population.
- Child sex ratio takes into account children in the age group of 0-6 years.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Providing affordable housing is an opportunity to make Indian cities more liveable for all residents, and can be a game-changer in the urban sector. Explain. (10 Marks, 150 Words) (GS 2) (Social Justice)
2. Will the Atmanirbhar Package and various incentives approved by the Government help in reviving the economy? Critically Examine. (15 Marks, 250 Words) (GS 3) (Economy)