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National register of citizens

How many face deportation?

- The number of people being left out of the NRC is not yet final, and it is not clear if any of them can be deported at all.
- First, the numbers. The final draft NRC had left out 40 lakh applicants. Another 1 lakh, originally among the 2.89 crore included in that draft, were removed after subsequent verification.
- However, the number is unlikely to remain at 41 lakh. There could be more deletions as objections have been filed against 2 lakh of the names included.
- There are likely be some additions, too. Of the 40 lakh excluded from the draft, 36 lakh have filed claims and some of them may have proved their citizenship with documents later.

- Then there is the possibility of the government reintroducing and passing the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, having allowed it to lapse earlier this year.
- If the Bill does become law, it would greatly reduce the number of individuals excluded from the final NRC.
- The final NRC is scheduled on July 31. Those left out will have a series of options for appeal, which is a long haul. Only after that will the question of deportation come up, if at all.

What makes deportation so uncertain?

- For a country to be able to deport a mass of individuals to another country, the second country has to accept that they were its citizens who entered the first country illegally.



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- According to government data until February 2019, and published in The Indian Express earlier, Assam has since 2013 deported 166 persons (162 “convicted” and four “declared”) including 147 to Bangladesh.
- The NRC context is vastly different: this is not about a few hundred but lakhs of individuals, many of whom have lived in Assam for decades and been identifying themselves as Indian citizens.
- Over the years, Bangladeshi leaders have frequently been quoted in the media as denying the presence of its nationals in India.

If not deportation, then what?

- The various points of appeal imply that the process of establishing citizenship or illegal stay in Assam could take years, if not decades.
- First, there are the quasi-judicial Foreigners Tribunals, which those left out of the final NRC will approach. If their claim is rejected again, they have the option of approaching the High Court and the Supreme Court.
- In between, there is the prospect of being sent to one of the six existing detention camps, or one of the 10 being planned.
- These have often come into focus for lack of basic facilities, and the Supreme Court recently allowed conditional release of those who have completed three years in detention, against a bond.
- For lakhs of people, what the future holds is uncertain as ever. Only a long court battle is certain, while a stateless identity with curtailed rights is a possibility. Deportation, if it ever happens, appears a long way away.



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Agricultural growth

Context

India's dream of becoming a \$5-trillion economy by 2024 is now in the open with a 'blue sky' vision envisaged in the Economic Survey this year. The document lays down a clear strategy to augment the growth of key sectors by shifting gears as the current economic conditions are smooth in terms of macroeconomic stability to expand growth. However, unless there are adequate investment reforms in primary sectors, steps taken to augment growth in other sectors would be futile.

What is needed?

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), insufficient investment in the agriculture sector in most developing countries over the past 30 years has resulted in low productivity and stagnant production.

- First, the wave of investment should touch segments such as agro-processing, and exports, agri-startups and agri-tourism, where the potential for job creation and capacity utilisation is far less. Integrating the existing tourism circuit with a relatively new area of agri-tourism (as a hub-and-spoke model), where glimpses of farm staff and farm operations are displayed to attract tourists, would help in boosting the investment cycle and generate in-situ employment.
- Second, investment needs to be driven to strengthen both public and private extension advisory systems and the quality of agri-education and research through collaboration and convergence.
- Third, given that India has the highest livestock population in the world, investment should be made to utilise this surplus by employing next-generation livestock technology with a strong emphasis not only on productivity enhancement but also on conservation of indigenous germplasm, disease surveillance, quality control, waste utilisation and value addition.
- This would lead to a sustained increase in farm income and savings with an export-oriented growth model.
- Fourth, investment in renewable energy generation (using small wind mill and solar pumps) on fallow farmland and in hilly terrain would help reduce the burden of debt-ridden electricity distribution companies and State governments, besides enabling energy security in rural areas.
- Fifth, a farm business organisation is another source of routing private investment to agriculture.



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- Linking these organisations with commodity exchanges would provide agriculture commodities more space on international trading platforms and reduce the burden of markets in a glut season, with certain policy/procedural modifications.
- Finally, data is the key driver of modern agriculture which in turn can power artificial intelligence-led agriculture, e-markets, soil mapping and others

Conclusion

Agriculture and its allied sectors are believed to be one of the most fertile grounds to help achieve the ambitious Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs).

An inclusive business model facilitating strong investor-farmer relations should be created, with a legal and institutional framework for governance. Expanding institutions is essential to accommodate the developmental impacts of foreign agricultural investment.

Investment in power sector

Why in news?

One of the key requirements for a \$5-trillion economy is an investment of about ₹5 lakh crore in the power transmission sector over the next few years, in order to cater to the 1.8 lakh crore units of electricity that India is likely to consume by 2025, according to a White Paper released by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Current scenario

The transmission sector, CII added, had seen a reduction in investments to below ₹1.8 lakh crore in the last five years.

The White Paper goes on to enumerate eight action points that the government must work on to enhance the transmission sector in line with the growth of the economy that is envisaged.

Need for huge investment?



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- “Traditional coal-fired power plants took 5-6 years to build compared to three to four years for construction of transmission lines required for power evacuation,” the White Paper said. “In comparison, wind or solar plants take 12-18 months to build, implying the need for advance planning of transmission projects.”
- “Increasing urbanisation, evolving demographics, expanding renewables and changing market dynamics have placed extraordinary pressure on utilities to solve energy-delivery challenges in an economical manner in the shortest possible time with minimum disruption.

RBI committee

Why in news?

A committee set up to recommend the appropriate economic capital framework for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended the transfer of excess capital from the central bank to the government over 3 to 5 years, according to a senior official. It has also recommended the framework should be reviewed periodically. .

What is the committee's mandate?

The Committee was set up in December last year following discussions between the finance ministry and the RBI about the manner in which the central banks' surplus can be shared with the government. It was expected to submit its report within 90 days of its first meeting;

What are the key contentious issues?



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- First and foremost is the issue of transferring past reserves including unrealised gains in gold and currency revaluation accounts.
- The other big issue pertains to RBI's profits. The committee was set up to "review status, need and justification of various provisions, reserves and buffers presently provided for by the RBI; and (to) review global best practices followed by the central banks in making assessment and provisions for risks which central bank balance sheets are subject to."

What is at stake?

- According to Section 47 of the RBI Act, profits of the RBI are to be transferred to the government, after making various contingency provisions, public policy mandate of the RBI, including financial stability considerations.
- For the year ending June 2018, RBI had total reserves of Rs 9.59 lakh crore, comprising mainly currency and gold revaluation account (Rs 6.91 lakh crore) and contingency fund (Rs 2.32 lakh crore).
- Many economists and expert committees have in the past argued that the RBI is holding much higher capital that required to cover all its risks and contingencies.
- Former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian said in Economic Survey 2016-17 that the RBI is "is already exceptionally highly capitalized" and nearly Rs 4 lakh crore of its capital transfer to the government can be used for recapitalising the banks and/or recapitalising a Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency.
- This proposal was opposed by the then RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan

Status of vulture in India

Why in news?



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The Union Environment Minister says the population of three species of endangered resident Gyps vultures – white-backed vulture, long-billed vulture and slender-billed vulture is 6,000, 12,000 and 1,000, respectively.

There has been a sharp decline in the population of vultures in the country which has come down from 40 million to 19,000 in a span of over three decades, the Environment Ministry told the Parliament on Friday.

Surveys being done

- The nationwide vulture surveys are being carried out by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) every four years sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Forest Departments of various States since 1990.
- “The surveys are carried out mainly for the three species of critically endangered resident Gyps vultures.
- These three species were very common in the country with an estimated population of 40 million in early eighties.
- Based on the latest survey carried out in 2015 and the results published in 2017, there were about 6,000 White-backed vultures, 12,000 Long-billed vultures and 1,000 Slender-billed vultures.

Causes of mortality

- The major cause of mortality of vultures was found to be the veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug ‘Diclofenac’, given to cattle in pain and inflammation.
- Diclofenac was found to be extremely toxic to vultures and causes renal failure. The Government of India banned the veterinary use of the drug in 2006 which was gazetted in 2008, but the misuse of multi-dose vials of human formulation of the drug in treating cattle was still causing mortality in vultures.

Steps taken

- Eight Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres (VCBCs) were established in various States.
- “Four of the centres, Pinjore in Haryana (established in 2004), Rajabhatkhawa (in 2006) in West Bengal, Rani in Assam (in 2009) and Kerwa near Bhopal (established in 2008) are managed by



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respective State Forest Departments with support from BNHS and the Union Ministry of Environment.

- “Four more centres i.e. Junagarh in Gujarat (established in 2006), Nandankanan in Odisha (in 2006), Hyderabad in Telangana (in 2006) and Muta in Ranchi are established in State zoos and are being run by State Forest Departments with support from the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) of the Ministry of Environment and technical support from BNHS.
- According to the figures, between 2016 and 2019, the government released a total of ₹12.53 crore for vulture conservation to five States - Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.
- For protection and conservation of vultures in the country, the government has also upgraded the status of White-backed, Long-billed and Slender-billed vultures from Schedule IV to Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- To conserve the remnant population of vultures and facilitate their reintroduction into the wild from breeding centres, attempts are being made to create Vulture Safe Zones in the areas where there are vulture populations.
- “The area in a radius of 100km around the VCBCs is made secure by community participation by ensuring that there is no use of vulture toxic veterinary NSAIDs, there is enough food and habitat and there is no other threat to vultures.
- This is done by a targeted advocacy and awareness programme.
- The Ministry said it has also taken initiatives to strengthen mass education and awareness for vulture conservation in the country.