

1. Criminal Procedure Identification Act

Topic: Polity and Governance



In News: The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 has come into effect.

More on the Topic:

- The new act authorises **taking measurements of convicts and other persons for the purposes of identification and investigation in criminal matters and to preserve records.**
- It provides **legal sanction** for taking appropriate body measurements of persons who are required to give such measurements.
- This include **finger-impressions, palm-print and foot-print impressions, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical, biological samples and their analysis among others.**
- The act also **empowers the National Crime Records Bureau of India to collect, store and preserve the record of measurements** and for sharing, dissemination, destruction and disposal of records.
- Under the act, the Police or Prison Officers have been given power to take measurements of any person who resists or refuses to give measurements.
- Resistance or refusal to give details will be considered an offence under IPC, 1860.

Issues to consider:

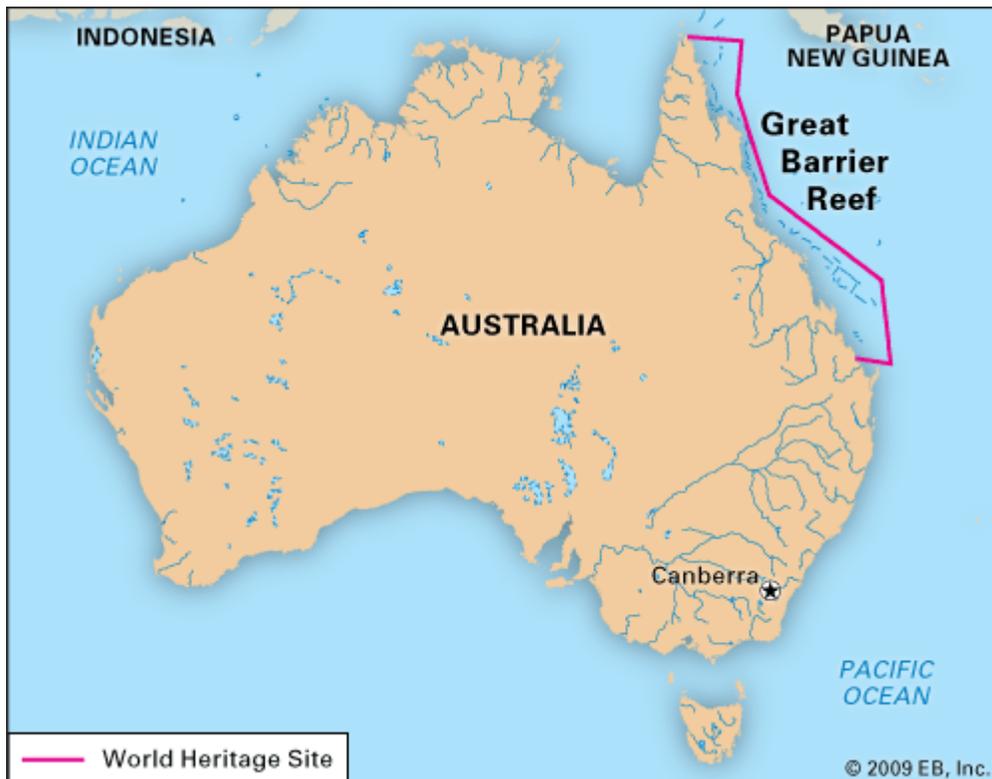
- Bill may violate the **Right to Privacy as well as Equality** because of the following reasons:
 - (a) data can be collected **not just from convicted persons but also from persons arrested for any offence** and from any other person to aid an investigation;
 - (b) the data collected **does not need to have any relationship with evidence required for the case;**
 - (c) **the data is stored in a central database** which can be accessed widely and not just in the case file;
 - (d) the data is **stored for 75 years (effectively, for life);** and

- (e) safeguards have been diluted by lowering the level of the official authorised to collect the data.

Source: Indian Express

2. Great Barrier Reef

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Coral cover in some parts of the Great Barrier Reef has recorded a record high growth.

More on the Topic:

- High coral cover findings **can be deceptive because they can result from only a few dominant species that grow rapidly after disturbance** (such as mass bleaching).
- The record levels of recovery were fuelled by **increases in the fast-growing Acropora corals**.
- These same corals, however, **are extremely susceptible to disturbance** and are likely to die out within a few years.
- The Great Barrier Reef spans 2,300 kilometres, comprising more than 3,000 individual reefs.

- It is an **exceptionally diverse ecosystem** that features more than 12,000 animal species, plus many thousand more species of plankton and marine flora.

About Coral Reefs:

- Corals are **invertebrate animals** belonging to a large group of colourful and fascinating animals called **Cnidaria**.
- **Each coral animal is called a polyp**, and most live in groups of hundreds to thousands of genetically identical polyps that form a 'colony'.
- **The colony is formed by a process called budding**, which is where the original polyp grows copies of itself.

About Coral Reefs:

- Coral reefs are underwater ecosystems crucial for ecological balance. They are called the **rainforests of the ocean**, but for a few years they are under great threat.
- **Coral reefs are created by millions of tiny polyps forming large carbonate structures.**
- Corals are found across the world's ocean, in both shallow and deep water, but reef-building corals are only found in shallow tropical and subtropical waters.
- This is because the algae found in their tissues need light for photosynthesis and they prefer water temperatures between 22-29°C.

Threats faced By Coral Reefs:

- Natural threats include diseases, predators, and storms.
- Raising **ocean temperatures causes ocean acidification**.
- **The increasing nutrient concentrations** leads to excessive phytoplankton growth, and attracts more and more marine life, which may cause strain on the reefs.
- **Extreme events of low tides** are a reason for bleaching. It exposes the corals to solar and ultraviolet radiations which can induce coral bleaching.
- High rates of land erosion causes silt and other sediments to leach into ocean waters which causes **sedimentation and water turbidity**. The siltation tends to smother corals and turbidity reduces light availability potentially reducing coral photosynthesis and growth.

Source: TOI

3. Peninsular Rock Agamas

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Habitat loss and other such features of urbanisation have affected the presence of the Peninsular Rock Agamas in urban centres.

More on the Topic:

- The Peninsular Rock Agama (*Psammophilus dorsalis*) which is **a type of garden lizard has a strong presence in southern India.**
- A study carried out by researchers from Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, undertook to characterise urbanisation in the region and also to understand where the rock agama resides in and around Bengaluru specifically.
- The factors that could affect the presence of the lizard and revealed that **they are found mainly in rocky places and warm spots.**
- Thus, **the conservation efforts must point towards retaining rocky patches even while reviving landscapes by planting trees.**

Source: Hindu

4. NITI Aayog Governing Council

Topic: Governance



In News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chaired the seventh NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting.

More on the Topic:

- The council held discussions over several issues such as crop diversification, urban development, implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), and urban governance.

About NITI Aayog's Governing Council:

- The Governing Council of NITI Aayog comprises **Prime Minister of India; Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with legislature; Lt Governors of other UTs; Ex-Officio Members; Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog; Full-Time Members, NITI Aayog; and Special Invitees.**
- It is the premier body tasked with **evolving a shared vision of national priorities and strategies**, with the active involvement of States, in shaping the development narrative.
- The Governing Council, which **embodies the objectives of cooperative federalism**, presents a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues to accelerate the implementation of the national development agenda.

Source: Indian Express

5. Cheerag Scheme

Topic: Government Schemes



In News: The state government of Haryana has recently launched the Cheerag scheme to provide “free education” to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) students of government schools in the “budget” of private schools.

More on the Topic:

- Cheerag Scheme stands for, “**Chief Minister Equal Education Relief, Assistance and Grant**”.
- Under the scheme, government school students whose parent's annual income is less than Rs 1.8 lakh can enrol in private schools from Class II to XII.
- **Government will reimburse the pre-determined school fee.**
- The selected 381 private schools have offered around 25,000 seats. However, less than 1700 students have preferred to enrol on the scheme.

Concerns:

- **The budget for the scheme could have used for the improvement of the government schools.**
- **The scheme may encourage private schools at the cost of government schools.**
- Taranga is a **Jain pilgrimage center** in Gujarat with two compounds of Jain temples that are important examples of the **Māru-Gurjara style of architecture**.
- The Ajitnatha temple, was constructed in 1161 by the Chaulukya king Kumarapala.
- **Both the main sects of Jainism are represented**, with adjoining walled compounds: the Svetambara compound consists of 14 temples in all, and there are also five Digambara-affiliated temples at Taranga hill.

Source: Business Standard

6. Ashok Chawla Committee on Natural Resource Allocation

Topic: Economy



In News: A recent Comptroller and Auditor General of India report had also highlighted gaps in spectrum allocations, finding a large quantity of spectrum lying idle. This has initiated a debate on Ashok Chawla committee report.

More on the Topic:

- A high-power committee was set up by the central government in January 2011 to examine the approach on how to allocate natural resources.
- The panel was headed by former finance secretary Ashok Chawla and was asked to prepare a roadmap for efficient and transparent distribution of resources like spectrum.
- **The panel looked into eight natural resources: Coal, minerals, spectrum, petroleum, natural gas, land, water and forests.**
- The Manmohan Singh-led central government accepted 69 out of the 81 recommendations of the committee.

Recommendations of the Panel:

- **Spectrum:** Spectrum **should be allocated to companies only through market-related processes** such as auctions.
- Allocation should be unbundled from the issuing of licences, so that companies can trade spectrum.
- An integrated legislative framework for spectrum management is needed for both commercial and non-commercial frequency bands — for optimal use of resources.
- **Land:** A public database of government land and its allocation for transparency. It had also recommended e-auction or competitive bidding for allocation and updating of land rent on par with market rate for better income.



- **Forests:** A scientific public domain database of **forest clearances** should be established and all decisions should be publicly available. The panel also called for **striking a balance between the value of the use for which the forest is needed** — like extracting minerals — and the value of the forest itself.
- **Natural gas:** The panel recommended market-based pricing for natural gas, with the price of imported LNG acting as a cap. The prices for natural gas to produce urea should be fixed by the government for agriculture.
- **Petroleum:** The committee called the New Exploration Licensing Policy a “benchmark for transparency in the natural resources sector”.
- **Coal:** It recommended end Coal India’s monopoly. Independent mining companies should be allowed to supply to end-users.
- **Minerals:** Shifting to market-based pricing for metals, minerals and other fossil fuels. It also called for development of areas being mined.
- **Water:** There is a need for a **comprehensive national legislation on water** in the country. There is a lack of an overall integrated system of water management.

Source: Hindu

7. Utkarsh Pahal Scheme

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: The Prime Minister has recently praised the Bharuch district administration and the Gujarat Government for covering 100 percent beneficiaries in the district under four national schemes through Utkarsh Pahal Scheme.

More on the Topic:

- Surat enrolled 100 percentage beneficiaries under four schemes — **Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Vrudhhavasta Pension Yojana (IGRVPY)**, **Niradhar Vrudh Sahay Yojana (NVSY)**, **Ganga Swaroop Arthik Sahay Yojana (GSASY)** and **Rashtriya Kutumb Sahay Yojana (RKSJ)**.
- The campaign saw the coming together of local political leaders and their team, the district administration and Industry association.

Source: Hindu
