

### BILL TO AMEND THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS ACT

#### Why in News?

- A Bill to amend the **Registration of Birth and Death Act 1969** is among the 21 new Bills listed to be introduced in the ongoing session of Parliament by the Union Home Ministry.
- The Bill is likely to make Aadhaar compulsory for those who possess one in order to register births and deaths.

#### Background in which this Bill will be introduced:

- Every individual has the **right to documentation**, a birth certificate or other forms of identification which they need to lead a dignified life.
- **The Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1969** is a simple law that was brought for registration of births and deaths in the country.
- Presently, **Aadhaar is not mandatory** for such registration and the proposed amendment to the 1969 Act will give it legal teeth.
- Recently, the Centre allowed the **Registrar General of India (RGI)** to perform Aadhaar authentication during registration of births and deaths in the country.

#### About the Bill:

- With new amendments, the Ministry of Home Affairs is proposing to **make Aadhaar mandatory** to track new births and deaths in any family.
- **It also requires States to compulsorily share data** on registered births and deaths with the RGI. However, the RGI will maintain its own register of births and deaths.
  - Presently, States are required to only send annual statistical reports to the RGI.
- The Bill proposes to also **make birth certificates mandatory** for joining schools, registration of votes, marriages, issuance of passports, in applications for government jobs, etc.

#### How will States share the Data and its Significance?

- As per the amendment, States will have to sign a MoU with the RGI to share the **Application Programming Interface (API)** from where the data can be pulled out.

- While all States are required to use the **Civil Registration System** (CRS) operated by the RGI to issue birth and death certificates, there are some States which have their own applications.
- The database will be used to update the population register or the **National Population Register (NPR)** - the first step towards the creation of the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) or NRC.
  - **The NPR**, which was first prepared in 2010 and revised through door-to-door enumeration in 2015, already has a database of 119 crore residents.
  - **The real-time updation** of the data on births and deaths **will eliminate the requirement of such enumeration to a large extent.**
  - It will also give a clear picture of population figures in real-time.
- The database will also be used **to update the electoral register**, Aadhaar, ration card, passport and driving licence databases.

### Concerns Regarding the Bill:

- The proposed amendments to a 50-year-old law will turn a simple state exercise into a **population controlling mechanism** that can be used against every citizen.
- This simple yet transformative exercise can be weaponised and used to **identify populations that are different and non-confirmative** - fear of a surveillance state.
- The linking of databases and creation of 360° profiles using Aadhaar has always been an issue that was **challenged in courts**, with the SC agreeing and recognising Indians' **fundamental right to privacy** (KS Puttaswamy case).

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### [NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS \(NCPCR\)](#)

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) recently wrote to the



Manipur DGP, directing it to take cognizance and file an FIR against three persons for posting photographs of a minor that they alleged was involved in an incident in Manipur in which two women were paraded naked.

## About National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):

- NCPCR is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.
- It works under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The Commission began operational on 5 March 2007.
- As defined by the commission, a child includes a person up to the age of 18 years.

**Mandate:** The Commission is mandated under section 13 of the CPCR Act, 2005 "to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child."

- The Commission is further mandated to monitor the proper and effective implementation of
  - Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
  - Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
  - Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

## Members:

- A chairperson who, is a person of eminence and has done outstanding work for promoting the welfare of children.
- Six members, out of which at least two are women, who are having experience in Education, Child Health, Juvenile justice, Elimination of child labour, Child psychology or sociology Laws relating to children.
- The members are appointed by the Central Government for a term of 3 years.

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## INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA)?

The International Seabed Authority's member nations recently agreed on a two-year roadmap for the adoption of deep-sea mining regulations.



## About International Seabed Authority (ISA):

- It is an **international organization established in 1994 to regulate mining and related activities in the international seabed beyond national jurisdiction**, an area that includes most of the world's oceans.
- The ISA **came into existence upon** the entry into force of the **1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, which codified international law regarding territorial waters, sea lanes, and ocean resources.
- **Headquarters: Kingston, Jamaica**
- **Members:** As of May 2023, ISA has 169 Members, including **168 Member States and the European Union.**

## Functions:

- The ISA is responsible for **granting licenses and regulating activities related to the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the international seabed.**
- It ensures that these activities are carried out in a manner that **protects the marine environment and promotes the equitable and efficient utilization of resources.**

## Structure:

- The **supreme authority of the ISA is the assembly**, in which all ISA members are represented.
- The assembly **sets general policies, establishes budgets, and elects a 36-member council, which serves as the ISA's executive authority.**
- The **council approves contracts with private corporations and government entities** for exploration and mining in specified areas of the international seabed.
- The **council oversees implementation of the seabed provisions of the UNCLOS** and establishes provisional rules and procedures (subject to approval by the assembly) by which the ISA exercises its regulatory authority.
- The **secretary-general of the ISA is nominated by the council and is elected by the assembly to a four-year term.**

## Key facts about the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):

- UNCLOS, also called the **Law of the Sea Convention** or the **Law of the Sea Treaty**, is an **international agreement** that establishes a legal framework for all marine and maritime activities.
- It lays down a **comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans** and seas, establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources.
- UNCLOS became **effective on 16th November 1982**.
- UNCLOS covers a wide range of issues, including:
  - The **definition of maritime zones**, such as the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone, and the continental shelf.
  - The **rights and responsibilities of coastal states** and flag states.
  - The **conservation and management** of marine resources.
  - The **protection of the marine environment**.
  - The **peaceful settlement of disputes**.

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## NATIONAL DENTAL COMMISSION BILL, 2023

The government recently introduced the National Dental Commission Bill, 2023, in the Lok Sabha.



### About National Dental Commission Bill, 2023:

- The Bill seeks to **repeal the Dentists Act, of 1948**.
- The bill also aims to **make dental education affordable** and **make quality oral healthcare accessible**.
- It seeks to **replace the Dental Council of India with the National Dental Commission (NDC)**.

### National Dental Commission (NDC):

- It will **draft policies and maintain quality standards in dental education and the profession**.
- The new commission will also regulate fees for **50% seats in private dental colleges**.



○ **Composition:**

- The composition of the NDC will be **similar to that of the National Medical Commission (NMC)**, which had replaced the Medical Council of India.
- **The head office of the National Dental Commission shall be at New Delhi and it will consist of a chairperson; eight ex officio members; and 24 part-time members.**
- They will be **appointed by the central government.**

Members of NMC, health ministry, AIIMS, New Delhi will be **among the eight ex-officio members.**

- **Out of 24 part-time members, a total of 19 members** will be appointed on rotational basis **from amongst the nominees of the states and union territories for two years.**
- **Other five members** who will be appointed for four years will **include two dental faculties** from any central or state or autonomous government institutes; **three members who have special knowledge** and professional experience **in areas including management, law, medical ethics**, health research, consumer or patient rights advocacy, science and technology and economics.
- According to Bill, the **commission's members will declare their assets and liabilities at the time of entering and demitting office** and also declare all professional and commercial engagements.

**Dental Advisory Council:**

- Under the provisions of the bill, the **central government will constitute an advisory body – the Dental Advisory Council.**
- The council will **advise the commission and will also be the platform through which states and UTs will put forth their views.**
- **It will also advise the Commission** on measures to “**enhance equitable access to dental education and uniform system of examination.**”
- The Bill will make **provision for an exit test for dentists on the lines of the National Exit Test** that is likely to be implemented **for those completing MBBS.**

## ISRAEL PARLIAMENT PASSES LAW THAT CURBS POWERS OF SUPREME COURT

### Why in news?

- Amid widespread protests, Israel successfully passed a highly contentious bill that reportedly curbs the power of the Supreme Court in the country.
- With this, the Israeli Parliament has limited the country's Supreme Court's ability to overturn decisions made by government ministers.
- It is the first to be approved in a series of bitterly contested reforms aimed at curbing the power of courts.
  - In an effort to overhaul the country's judicial system, Israeli government had proposed four major reforms.
  - Of these, the first reform, concerning the ability of the supreme Court to overturn decisions made by government ministers, has been passed.

### What is the new measure that has been passed?

- Under the new law, the Supreme Court **cannot overrule the national government using the legal standard of reasonableness.**
  - A decision is deemed unreasonable if a court rules that it was made without considering all relevant factors or without giving relevant weight to each factor, or by giving irrelevant factors too much weight.
- It should be noted that Israel has no constitution, and many of the rights and freedoms that its people enjoy are contained in **Basic Law.**
- Hence, Israeli judges previously used the legal standard of reasonableness to strike down decisions made by lawmakers and ministers.
- Netanyahu's government has argued that the change would help democracy foster in the country as it gives more power to the elected legislators in comparison to unelected judges.

### Why is Netanyahu's government changing Israel's judicial system?

- Conservatives and the right-wing in Israel have for a long time seen the judiciary as a left-leaning impediment to its legislative agenda.
  - For instance, the ruling ultra-right coalition seeks more power in a bid to overturn court judgements that:
    - expanded social reforms to support the LGBTQ community and
    - barred previous governments from constructing Israeli outposts on private Palestinian land.
  - The government has defended the judicial change proposals saying they will restore a proper balance between the three branches of the government.
  - Netanyahu's coalition government has claimed that its reform plans would restore power to elected representatives instead of interventionist judges.
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## THE PRONAB SEN COMMITTEE: IS THERE A NEED TO COMPLETELY OVERHAUL NATIONAL SURVEYS?

**Why in News?** The Government of India recently appointed a panel under the chairmanship of Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician of India to review the methodology of the National Statistical Organisation (NSO).

### **About the Pronab Sen Committee:**

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has formed a new **Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS)** to advise on official data generated by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- This panel will replace the **Standing Committee on Economic Statistics (SCES)** that was formed in 2019 to advise on economic data.

### **SCoS vs SCES:**

- **The SCES was mandated to review the framework for economic indicators** such as those pertaining to the industrial and services sectors, along with labour force statistics.
- **Its focus was limited to reviewing high-frequency data** like the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), apart from surveys and enumerations like the



- Economic Census,
- Annual Survey of Industries and
- Periodic Labour Force Survey.
- **The SCoS has enhanced terms of reference** that enable it to advise the Ministry not just on all existing surveys and data sets, but also -
  - Identify areas where data gaps exist,
  - Suggest ways to fill them and carry out pilot surveys and
  - Studies to fine-tune new approaches for capturing better data.
- **The new committee** is also half the size of the 28-member panel that was reviewing economic data.

## Why is there a Need to Review the Methodology of the NSO?

- **National level data is a key resource** for research, policymaking and development planning, so it is of utmost importance to understand and analyse the data in the light of existing evidence.
- **Usage of outdated survey methodology by national surveys** such as the National Sample Survey (NSS), National Family Health Survey (NFHS) and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), have systematically underestimated India's development.
  - **This archaic methodology** has failed to capture reality in the recent past as the Indian economy has been incredibly dynamic in the last 30 years.

## Case of NFHS:

- Conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the last 30 years with the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) as the nodal agency. **NFHS has rural bias in terms of representation.**
- The survey methodology, which depends heavily on the last Census data, **systematically overestimates the rural population** (when compared with WB data).
- **For example**, there is evidence that rural population overestimation seems to have taken place by NFHS-2 and NFHS-5. However, these errors seem random rather than systematic.