

1. Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020

Why in News?

- Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 aimed to improve India's aviation safety ratings and provide statutory status to regulatory institutions like the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) got approved from the Lok Sabha recently.

Highlights:

- The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 provides for statutory backing to the DGCA, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).
- There was a need to provide statutory backing to regulatory bodies as they were set up under executive order.
- The Bill also provides for keeping aircraft belonging to the country's armed forces outside the purview of the Aircraft Act, 1934.
- The Bill proposes to increase the fine for violations of rules from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore.
- The Bill would bring regulation regarding air navigation services under its purview.

Need:

- While the air fares are needed to remain affordable, it was also necessary that the airline business remains viable.
- The civil aviation sector has been deregulated and the government does not set air fare.
- The Airlines are losing considerable amount of money amid COVID-19 outbreak.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation:

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is the regulatory body in the field of Civil Aviation, primarily dealing with safety issues.
- It is responsible for regulation of air transport services to/from/within India and for enforcement of civil air regulations, air safety, and airworthiness standards.
- The DGCA also co-ordinates all regulatory functions with the International Civil Aviation Organisation.
- DGCA has been given statutory status under the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

2. Uncertainty over NPR

Why in News?

- At least 13 States, and Delhi, covering almost 60% of the total population of India, are opposed to the revision of the National Population Register (NPR) in the format being prepared by the Centre, even as the nationwide exercise is scheduled to kick off in barely two weeks' time on April 1.

Highlights:

- Home minister has told that people could choose to not respond to questions, but Chief Ministers and activists have said that this is no guarantee that they would not face any problems in the future.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had informed the Lok Sabha that it was in discussion with States that had expressed concerns over the controversial additional questions in the NPR form.
- The MHA had informed a parliamentary panel that during works towards updating the NPR 2020, it is proposed to collect data on some additional items like place of last residence, mother tongue, Aadhaar number (voluntary), mobile number, passport (Indian passport holder), voter ID card, driving license number, date and place of birth of father and mother.
- Activists have pointed out that as the law stands, not providing information for the NPR can be an offence and the NPR could be used for identifying genuine citizens and doubtful ones. West Bengal was the first State to announce that it would not canvass the NPR form during the census operations, followed by Kerala. Both States have put the NPR exercise on hold.

3. Ibuprofen and COVID-19

Why in News?

- The health minister of France, Olivier Véran, has issued a blunt warning about painkillers taken by people ill with the coronavirus, especially to stay away from drugs like ibuprofen and aspirin.

Highlights:

- The So-called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen worsened symptoms of the illness caused by the coronavirus, according to the health minister.

- Some patients had experienced serious adverse effects while taking the drugs, known as NSAIDs, which should not be used in these patients.
- The advice left many medical experts scratching their heads. The coronavirus is a new pathogen, and little is known about the disease it causes, called COVID-19, or how patients respond to common medications.
- The Minister's warning followed a letter published in The Lancet. The letter's authors proposed that certain drugs increase the number of so-called ACE2 receptors on the surfaces of cells.
- The coronavirus uses these receptors to infect cells, the authors noted, and so in theory patients taking the drugs might be more vulnerable to the virus. One of the drugs was ibuprofen. But researchers say there is no such proof.
- There are reasons to worry about long-term, heavy use of NSAIDs, which have been linked an increased risk of kidney damage in some patients. People taking blood thinners also should avoid NSAIDs.
- But for infectious disease specialists, the greater concern is that when NSAIDs and acetaminophen reduce fever, patients may be more comfortable but their lower temperatures can short-circuit the body's main defense against infection.
- Studies have found that if people infected with a variety of viruses and other microorganisms bring their fevers down, with NSAIDs or with acetaminophen, their symptoms may last longer and they continue to shed virus for a longer time, meaning they may be contagious for longer periods.

4. National Commission for Homoeopathy Medicine Bill 2019

Why in News?

- Recently, Rajya Sabha has passed the National Commission for Homoeopathy Medicine Bill 2019.

About National Commission for Homoeopathy Medicine Bill 2019

- It seeks to repeal the Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973.
- It proposed to setup a National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) which will replace the existing regulator Central Council for Homoeopathy (CCH) so as to ensure transparency.
- It will setup three autonomous boards under NCH. They are

- ✓ Homoeopathy Education Board will be entrusted with conducting overall education of Homoeopathy.
- ✓ The Board of assessment and rating will assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Homoeopathy.
- ✓ Board of ethics and registration of practitioners of Homoeopathy will maintain National Register and ethical issues relating to practice are under the NCH.
- Under the Bill, the central government will constitute an Advisory Council for Homoeopathy. The Council will be the primary platform through which the states/union territories can put forth their views and concerns before the NCH.
- It proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses. It also has a teacher's eligibility test has been proposed to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions.

5. Tejas Aircraft

Why in News?

- Recently, Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) cleared acquisition of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter aircraft for Indian Air Force (IAF) with more advanced configuration than the 40 currently on order.

About:

- It is an Indian single-engine, delta wing, multirole light fighter designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.
- It came from the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme, which began in the 1980s to replace India's ageing MiG-21 fighters.
- It is pegged as the world's smallest and lightest supersonic Fighter Aircraft in its class.
- In 2003, the LCA was officially named "Tejas".
- The proposal will now be placed for consideration of Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

