

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations (BEFR), 1873**

Union Cabinet granted Ex-post facto approval to amend the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations.

About:

- The Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval to the Adaptation of Laws (Amendment) Order, 2019 issued by the President of India under clause (2) of article 372 of the Constitution to amend the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations (BEFR), 1873.
- The notification will extend BEFR to the State of Manipur to give its indigenous people protection from the provisions of Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and make necessary changes in the said Regulation.

Related Info: The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, grants citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists and Christians fleeing religious persecution from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and came to India on or before December 31, 2014.

National Population Register (NPR)

The Union Cabinet approved a proposal to conduct Census 2021 and updation of National Population Register (NPR).

About:

- The National Population Register (NPR) is a register of usual residents of the country. It includes both Indian citizens as well as a foreign citizen.
- According to the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, a usual resident is 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.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.

Timeline:

- The first National Population Register was prepared in 2010 and updation of this data was done during 2015 by conducting door to door survey.
- The next update of the NPR will take place next year from April to September 2020 in all the States/UTs except Assam along with the Houselisting phase of the Census 2021.

Details required for NPR:

- The demographic details of every individual are required on 21 points which includes 'date and place of birth of parents', last place of residence, Permanent Account Number (PAN), Aadhar (on a voluntary basis), Voter ID card number, Driving License Number and Mobile Number.
- In the last NPR done in 2010, the data was collected on the 15 points and it did not include 'date and place of birth of parents' and last place of residence.

NPR vs NRC: The NPR is different from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which excludes the foreign citizens. NRC is a register containing details of Indian Citizens living in India and outside India.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban**

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban had achieved its goal of making urban India free of open defecation, though urban local bodies in West Bengal had not been declared open defecation free (ODF).

About:

- Urban areas of 35 states and Union Territories have become Open Defecation Free (ODF). In all, 4,320 cities out of 4,372 have declared themselves ODF, of which 4,167 cities have been certified through third-party verification.
- This has been achieved by the construction of nearly 65.81 lakh individual household toilets against Mission target of 59 lakhs and 5.89 lakh seats of public toilets against Mission target of 5.08 lakh seats.

Related Info:

- The Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban (SBM-U), launched on 2nd October 2014 aims at making urban India free from open defecation and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste in 4,041 statutory towns in the country.

Year End Review- 2019: Ministry Of Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises

Ministry Of Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises (MSME) has taken many steps during the year for technology advancement, skill development and job creation for empowerment of MSMEs.

About:

- Under Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), 65,312 new micro enterprises have been set up. PMEGP is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by the Ministry of MSME since 2008-09.
- 51 SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) Clusters approved earlier are completed and are functional.
- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind launched the Solar Charkha Mission in 2018. 11 Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of Solar Charkha Clusters have been approved by the Scheme Steering Committee during current financial year 2019-20.
- The Government approved for continuation of Credit Linked Capital Subsidy component under Credit Linked Capital Subsidy-Technology Upgradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS) in February 2019.
- Ministry of MSME is implementing Technology Centre Systems Programme (TCSP) at an estimated cost of Rs. 2200 crore, including World Bank Loan assistance of USD 200 million, to establish 15 new Tool Rooms and Technology Development Centres (TCs)
- RBI Expert Committee under U. K. Sinha on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises made 37 major recommendations.
- Khadi has got unique HS code issued by the central government on 4th Nov'19 to categorize its products in export.

Atal Jal

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the implementation of the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL).

About:

- Type: A Central Sector Scheme
- Implementation Period: of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25).
- Funding: Out of the total outlay of Rs. 6000 crore, 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan, and remaining 50% shall be through Central Assistance from regular budgetary support. The entire amount shall be passed on to the States as Grants.
- States covered: The scheme aims to improve ground water management through community participation in identified priority areas in seven States, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- Implementing body: The Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

ATAL JAL has two major components:

- Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building for sustainable ground water management in the States including improving monitoring networks, capacity building, strengthening of Water User Associations, etc.
- Incentivising the States for achievements in improved groundwater management practices namely, data dissemination, preparation of water security plans etc.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Fisheries And Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)**

The First tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed under Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF) between the department of Fisheries Government of India, NARBARD and the Government of Tamil Nadu for the implementation of FIDF.

About:

- Background: In October 2018, Union Cabinet approved the creation of special FIDF.
- Objective: From the FIDF, entrepreneurs, fishermen and cooperatives will get loans at subsidised interest rate. The credit from the fund will help attract investment in fisheries development and boost fish production by 67% in next four years from current level of 12 million tonnes to 20 million tonnes by 2022-23.
- Fund size: The approved fund size is Rs. 7,522 crore, comprising Rs 5,266 crore to be raised by the nodal loaning entities (NLEs), Rs 1,316 crore from beneficiaries' contribution and Rs 939.48 crore by budgetary support. The credit from the FIDF will have to be disbursed by 2022-23.

- Nodal Loaning Entities (NLEs): National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and all scheduled banks are the designated NLEs in disbursement of the fund.
- Interest rate: The Department of Fisheries under the FIDF provides interest subvention up to 3% per annum for providing the concessional finance by the NLEs at the interest rate not lower than 5% per annum.
- Repayment period: The government has fixed the repayment period at maximum 12 years including moratorium of two years on principal amount.

Insolvency And Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019

The Union Cabinet has approved Promulgation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

About:

- Under the Amendments, the liability of a corporate debtor for an offence committed prior to the commencement of the corporate insolvency resolution process shall cease.
- The corporate debtors will have immunity against offences committed by them prior to the commencement of the resolution process.
- In addition, it provides immunity from any action against the property (such as attachment, seizure, or confiscation) of the corporate debtor in relation to such offences. Such immunity will be granted if the resolution plan approved by the NCLT results in the change of promoters, or management of the corporate debtor.
- However, any person in charge of the corporate debtor, or associated with it, will continue to be held liable for such offences.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Ngc Ecoclub Programme

In a first, Annual Meet of the State Nodal Agencies implementing the National Green Corps 'Ecoclub' programme was organized by the Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the GEER Foundation, Gujarat in Kevadia, Gujarat.

About:

- Environment Education Awareness and Training (EEAT) is an established central sector scheme of the Ministry of the Environment continuing since 1983-84 and aims to promote environmental awareness and mobilize student's participation for environment conservation.
- Under the scheme, National Green Corps (NGC) 'Ecoclub' programme was initiated in 2001-2002 with the objective to impart knowledge to school children through hands on experience, about their immediate environment.
- It is envisaged that number of Ecoclubs shall be enhanced from about 1.5 lakh at present to 2 lakh in the ensuing year 2020-21

Bar-Headed Goose

Bar-headed goose, a rare goose species was sighted in the wetlands of Karingali Pancha in Kerala. The Pancha is a major birding spot in the district which reported the highest bird count in the Asian Waterfowl Census of 2015.

About:

- Scientific name: Anser Indicus.
- Range: Bar-headed geese are found in central China and Mongolia and they breed there. They start migration to the Indian sub-continent during the winter and stay here till the end of the season. They return to their homes by crossing the Himalayan ranges. They can fly even at very high altitude. Their migration has been a fascination for birders as they cross the Himalayas on one of the most high-altitude migrations in the world.
- IUCN Status: Least Concern.

India's First Long Distance Cng Bus

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister unveiled India's first long distance Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus fitted with CNG cylinders in New Delhi.

About:

- It can travel around one thousand kilometre in a single fill.
- The first long range interstate CNG bus will ply from Delhi to Dehradun. such type of buses will soon ply between Delhi to Jaipur, Chandigarh and Agra.

- The project has been executed by Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL), the largest CNG distribution company in the country in partnership with Mahindra & Mahindra, & Agility Fuel Solutions of USA.
- It has been achieved through pioneering design of Type IV Composite Cylinders in buses, replacing traditional very heavy Type-I Carbon Steel cylinders. These cylinders are 70% lighter than the Type - I (all steel) cylinders which are being used in India currently.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**Automotive Industry Standards (AIS)-155**

The Union Ministry of Road Transport issued a notification regarding Automotive Industry Standards (AIS)-155 in respect of Microdot identifiers if affixed on the motor vehicles and their parts.

About:

- This was done through amendment in Rule 92 of the Central Motor vehicles (Fourteenth Amendment) Rules 1989.
- As per a new notification, the Manufacturers who are affixing microdot identifiers in the motor vehicles and their parts, components, assemblies, sub-assemblies shall conform to Automotive Industry Standards (AIS)-155 as amended from time to time.”

Microdot Technology:

- Microdot technology involves spraying the body and parts of the vehicle or any other machine with microscopic dots, which give a unique identification.
- The microdots and adhesive will become permanent fixtures/affixation which cannot be removed without damaging the asset, that is the vehicle itself. These nearly invisible microdots can only be read physically with a microscope and identified with ultra violet light source.
- Use of this technology will help check theft of vehicles and also use of fake spare parts.

Hypersonic Weapons

President Vladimir Putin said that Russia is the only country in the world that has hypersonic weapons.

About:

- Putin said that for the first time in history Russia has an edge in designing a new class of weapons unlike in the past when it was catching up with the United States.
- He said that the first unit equipped with the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle is set to go on duty this month, while that the air-launched Kinzhal hypersonic missiles already have entered service.
- the missile flies 10 times faster than the speed of sound, has a range of more than 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) and can carry a nuclear or a conventional warhead.

Mach Number:

Mach number (designated as M or Ma) is the ratio of the speed of the body to the speed of sound in the undisturbed medium through which the body is traveling. E.g. If the body is flying at Mach 2, then its speed is twice the speed of sound in air (which is 332 m/s or 1195 km/hr).

It is named in honor of Ernst Mach (1838-1916), a physicist from Austria.

Types of Aircrafts/missiles based on Mach Number (Source-NASA):

- Subsonic ($M < 1$)
- Transonic ($M = 1$)
- Supersonic ($1 < M < 3$)
- High Supersonic ($3 < M < 5$)
- Hypersonic ($M > 5$)
- High Hypersonic ($M \sim 25$)

DEFENCE AND SECURITY**Sarvatra Kavach**

In 2014, Major Anoop Mishra was felicitated by Army chief Gen. Bipin Rawat with the Army Design Bureau (ADB) excellence award for indigenously developing Sarvatra Kavach.

About:

- Sarvatra Kavach is a bulletproof jacket that can provide protection against various ammunition including that of sniper rifles. It provides protection from neck to ankle and upper arms.
- The project was sanctioned in June 2017 and initially the design and development of a Level IIIA soft body armour suit was sanctioned and was subsequently revised to include a Level IV hard armour panel inserts.

Strategic Tunnel Under Rohtang Pass

The Union Cabinet has decided to name the Strategic Tunnel under Rohtang Pass after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

About:

- The decision to construct a strategic tunnel below the Rohtang Pass was taken in 2000 when late Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister. The foundation stone for the Access Road to the South Portal of the tunnel was laid in 2002.
- The 8.8-kilometre long tunnel is the world's longest tunnel above an altitude of 3,000 metres. It will reduce the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 kilometres. It is a 10.5-metre wide single tube bi-lane tunnel with a fire proof emergency egress tunnel built into the main tunnel itself.
- The tunnel is now nearing completion and will providing all weather connectivity to remote border areas of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh which otherwise remained cut off from the rest of the country for about six months during winters.

Related Info: Rohtang Pass is a high mountain pass on the eastern Pir Panjal Range of the Himalayas. It connects the Kullu Valley with the Lahaul and Spiti Valleys of Himachal Pradesh.

Chief Of Defence Staff (CDS)

The Union Cabinet has approved to create the post of Chief of Defence Staff in the rank of a four-star General.

About:

- The Chief of Defence Staff will head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), to be created within the Ministry of Defence and function as its Secretary.
- The following areas will be dealt by the Department of Military Affairs headed by CDS:
- The Armed Forces of the Union, namely, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.
- Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence comprising Army Headquarters, Naval Headquarters, Air Headquarters and Defence Staff Headquarters.

The Territorial Army.

- Works relating to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.
- Procurement exclusive to the Services except capital acquisitions, as per prevalent rules and procedures.
- The CDS will also be the Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and thus will perform the following functions:
- Tri-service agencies/organisations/commands related to Cyber and Space will be under the command of the CDS.
- CDS will be member of Defence Acquisition Council chaired by Raksha Mantri and Defence Planning Committee chaired by NSA.
- Function as the Military Adviser to the Nuclear Command Authority.
- Bring about jointness in operation, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance, etc of the three Services, within three years of the first CDS assuming office.
- He will also act as the Principal Military Adviser to Defence Minister on all tri-Services matters.
- CDS will not exercise any military command, including over the three Service Chiefs, so as to be able to provide impartial advice to the political leadership.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, EVENTS, AWARDS ETC

Ezhuthachan Puraskaram

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan presented the Ezhuthachan Award for the year 2019 to writer Anand (P. Sachidanandan) at Thiruvananthapuram. The author has penned novels such as Aalkootam, Maranacertificate and Marubhoomikal Undakunnathu.

About:

- The Ezhuthachan Puraskaram is the highest literary honour that is given by the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, Government of Kerala.
- The award is named after Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan, the father of the Malayalam language.
- It consists of a cash prize of ₹ 5 lakh.
- The award was instituted in 1993.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Every matter of public interest cannot be a matter of public interest litigation'. Comment.

Public interest litigation (PIL) which was devised by the apex court in 1984, is a valuable mechanism to redress the problems of the neglected, alienated and marginalized sections of society whose fundamental rights are infringed and violated and whose grievances go unnoticed, unrepresented and unheard.

Advantages of PIL

- PILs help in clarifying the laws.
- PILs have made it easier for the judiciary to haul up the executive when it is not performing its duties properly.
- It gives vulnerable people a voice by highlighting an important issue and providing a platform for advocating for their rights.
- PILs help in raising awareness of important issues encouraging public debate and media coverage.
- PIL was started with a good intention to help the poor people of this country. But with the passage of time, PILs are gradually turning into 'private interest litigation', 'political interest litigation' and 'publicity interest litigation', and thus attempting to appropriate PIL for corporate gain, political advantage or personal interest.

Misuse

- Almost any issue is presented to the courts in the guise of public interest because of the allurements that the PIL jurisprudence offers (e.g. inexpensive, quick response, and high impact).
- PIL is being misused by people agitating for private grievances in the grab of public interest and seeking publicity rather than espousing public causes.
- It is also observed that PIL is being misused as an instrument to 'settle scores with corporate rivals and also for personal vendetta'.
- Number of political parties are also seen filing frivolous petitions to get political mileage.
- The judiciary has been criticized due to the overstepping of its jurisdiction and that it is unable to implement its orders effectively.

Way forward

- Court needs to authoritatively declare that it will interfere only in cases of violation of fundamental rights related to people who cannot themselves approach the court because of poverty and lack of resources.
- As reiterated in a series of judgments, PIL should not be misutilised for personal agenda and to advance political gain.
- In Ashok kumar v State of W.B. case, the Supreme Court has laid down certain conditions on which the court has to satisfy itself while entertaining PILs. Thus these guidelines must be strictly adhered to so as to check the misuse of PIL jurisprudence.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

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| <p>1. With reference to the Bar-headed goose, consider the following statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are mainly found in India. 2. They are listed as Vulnerable in IUCN Red list. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> <p>2. What is "Sarvatra Kavach", recently seen in news?</p> <p>(a) Bulletproof jacket
(b) Missile
(c) Battle tank
(d) Light machine gun</p> | <p>3. With reference to the National Green Corps 'Ecoclub' programme, consider the following statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was organized by the Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the GEER Foundation, Gujarat in Kevadia, Gujarat. 2. It aims to impart knowledge to school children through hands on experience, about their immediate environment. <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <p>(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2</p> |
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4. With reference to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF), consider the following statements:

1. The approved fund size is Rs 50,000 crore
2. Only National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) is the designated Nodal Lending Entities (NLEs) in disbursement of the fund.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) **Neither 1 nor 2**

5. With reference to the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched on 2nd October 2014
2. It aims at making urban India free from open defecation and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste in 4,041 statutory towns in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

6. With reference to the Microdot Technology, consider the following statements:

1. It involves spraying the body and parts of the vehicle or any other machine with microscopic dots, which give a unique identification.
2. Use of this technology will help check theft of vehicles and also use of fake spare parts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. With reference to the Ezhuthachan Puraskaram /Award, 2019, consider the following statements:

1. M. T. Vasudevan Nair has been selected for the 27th Ezhuthachan Puraskaram.
2. It is the highest literary honour that is given by the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, Government of Kerala.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

8. With reference to the National Population Register (NPR), consider the following statements:

1. According to the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, a usual resident is 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.
2. It is a register containing details of Indian Citizens living in India and outside India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) **1 only**
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

9. With reference to the National Population Register (NPR), consider the following statements:

1. According to the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, a usual resident is 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.
2. It is a register containing details of Indian Citizens living in India and outside India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) **1 only**
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

10. Which of the following are the functions performed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)?

1. Tri-service agencies/organisations/commands related to Cyber and Space
2. Military Adviser to the Nuclear Command Authority.
3. Military command over the three Service Chiefs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only

- (b) **1 and 2 only**
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
11. Rohtang Pass is a high mountain pass connects which of the following valleys?
(a) **Kullu with the Lahaul and Spiti**
(b) Qazigund with Bichleri
(c) Lower Dibang with east Siang
(d) Bakkal with Kauri
12. With reference to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019, consider the following statements:
1. Under the Amendments, the liability of a corporate debtor for an offence committed prior to the commencement of the corporate insolvency resolution process shall cease.
 2. The corporate debtors will have immunity against offences committed by them prior to the commencement of the resolution process.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. Union Cabinet granted Ex-post facto approval to amend the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations (BEFR). The notification will extend BEFR to which of the following state?
(a) Uttar Pradesh
(b) West Bengal
(c) Bihar
(d) **Manipur**
14. With reference to the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL), consider the following statements:
1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme.
 2. It is implemented by the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
15. With reference to the India's first long distance Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus, consider the following statements:
1. The first long range interstate CNG bus will ply from Delhi to Dehradun.
 2. The project has been executed by Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
16. With reference to the initiatives taken by Ministry Of Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises (MSME), consider the following statements:
1. The Government approved for continuation of Credit Linked Capital Subsidy component under Credit Linked Capital Subsidy-Technology Upgradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS).
 2. Ministry of MSME is implementing Technology Centre Systems Programme (TCSP) to establish 15 new Tool Rooms and Technology Development Centres (TCs).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) **Both 1 and 2**
(d) Neither 1 nor 2